

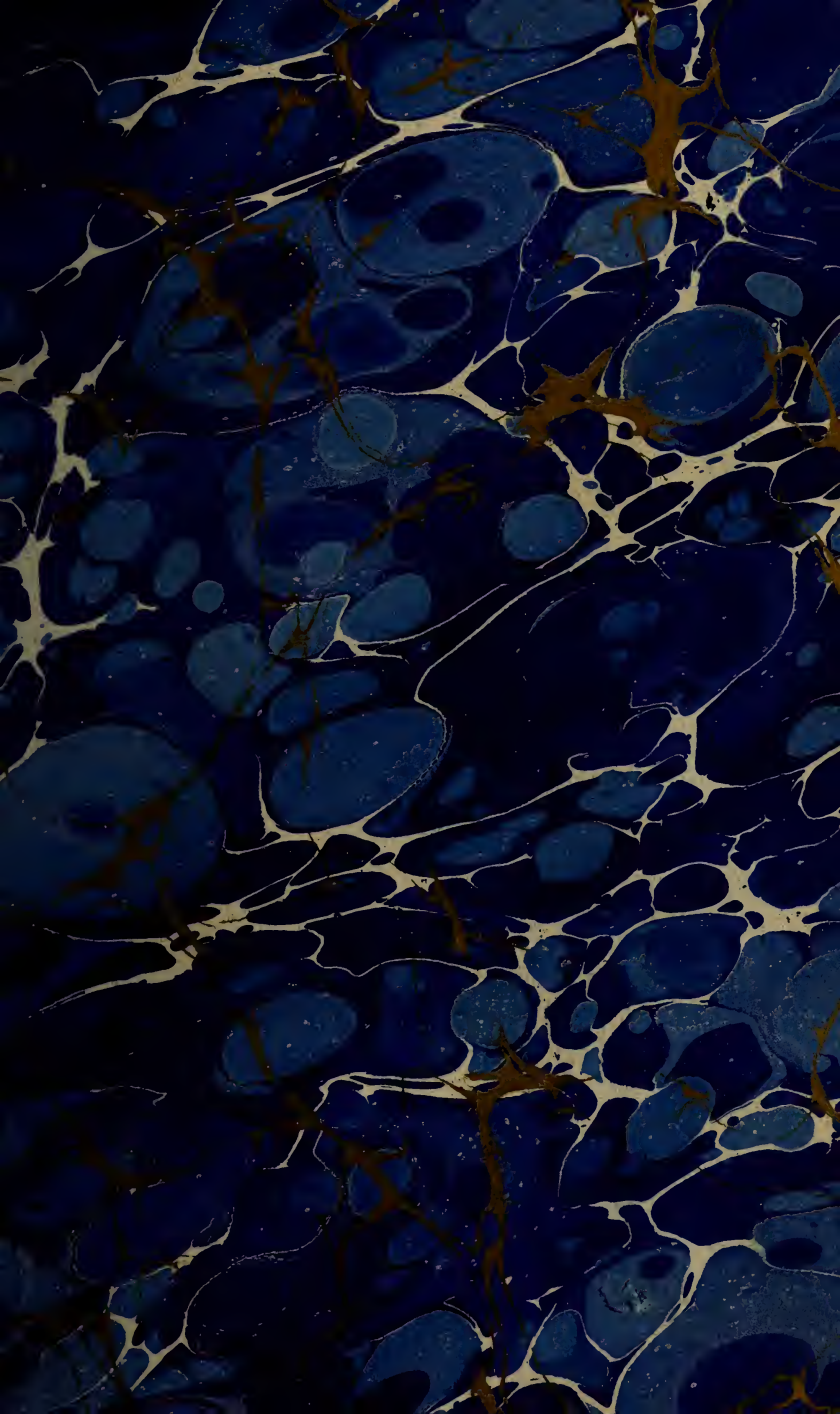
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# Preliminary Discourse

ON THE

O R I G I N

OF THE

*A M E R I C A N S.*

**A**FTER reading almost every thing that has been writ on the manner in which America might have been peopled, we seem to be just where we were before this great and interesting question began to be agitated; notwithstanding, it would require a moderate volume to relate only the various opinions of the learned on this subject. For most part of them have given so much into the marvellous, almost all of them have built their conjectures on foundations so ruinous, or have had recourse to certain resemblances of names, manners, customs, religion and languages, so very frivolous, which it would, in my opinion, be as useless to refute, as it is impossible to reconcile with each other.

It is not, perhaps, to be wondered at, that those who have first treated this matter, should wander in

a way which had not as yet been marked out, and in which they must travel without a guide. But what I am surprized at is, that those who have gone deepest into this affair, and who have had the advantage of helps beyond all those who have gone before them, should have been guilty of still greater mistakes, which at the same time they might easily have avoided, had they kept to a small number of certain principles, which some have established with sufficient judgment. The simple and natural consequences they ought to have drawn from them, would have been, in my opinion, sufficient to satisfy and determine the curiosity of the publick, which this unseasonable and erroneous display of erudition throws back into its original uncertainty. This is what I flatter myself I shall be able to make appear, by that small portion of these conjectures which I am now going to relate.

Those of our hemisphere were, no doubt, much surprized, when they were told of the discovery of a new world in the other, where they imagined nothing was to be seen, but an immense and dangerous ocean. Notwithstanding, scarce had Christopher Columbus found out some islands, and amongst others that of Hispaniola, in which he discovered gold mines, but he was presently of opinion, sometimes that this was the Ophir of Solomon, and at others the Zipangri, or the Cipango of Mark Pol the Venetian. Vatablus and Robert Stephens were likewise persuaded, that it was to America that Solomon sent fleets in quest of gold, and Columbus thought he saw the remains of his furnaces in the mines of Cibas, by much the finest and richest of the island of Hispaniola, and perhaps of all the new world.



Arius Montanus not only places Ophir and Parvaim in the new world, but likewise makes Joctan, the son of Heber, the founder of Juctan, a chimerical city in Peru; and also pretends, that the empire of Peru and that of Mexico, which he will have to be the same with Ophir, were founded by a son of Joctan of that name. He adds, that another son of the same patriarch, called in the scripture Jobab, was the father of the nations on the coast of Paria, and that the eastern mountain Sephar, to which Moses says the children of Joctan penetrated after departing from Messa, is the famous chain of the Ardes, extending from North to South quite thorough Peru and Chili. The authority of this learned interpreter of the scriptures has drawn Postel, Becan, Possévin, Genebrard, and many others, into the same opinion. Lastly, the Spaniards have asserted, that in the time when the Moors invaded their country, part of the inhabitants took refuge in America. They even pretended in the fifteenth century, that they discovered certain provinces of their empire, which the misfortunes of those times had robbed them of, and to which, if you believe them, they had an incontestable right. Oviedo, one of their most celebrated authors, was not afraid to affirm, that the Antilles are the famous Hesperides, so much vaunted of by the poets; and that God, by causing them to fall under the dominion of the kings of Spain, has only restored what belonged to them three thousand one hundred and fifty years ago in the time of king Hesperus, from whom they had this name; and that St. James and St. Paul preached the gospel there, which he supports by the authority of St. Gregory in his morals. If we add to this what Plato has advanced, that beyond his own island of Atalantis, there were a great number of



islands, and behind them a vast continent, and behind this continent the true ocean, we shall find, that the new world was very far from being new to the ancients. What then must become of the opinion of Paracelsus, who maintains, that each hemisphere had its own Adam?

Postel, whom I have already cited, and who has made himself famous by his adventurous conjectures, believed that all North America was peopled by the Atlantides, inhabitants of Mauritania; and he is the first who has made such a difference between the two America's, by means of the Isthmus of Panama; that according to him, and those who have adopted his opinions, the inhabitants of those two continents have nothing common in their original. But in this case, I should rather be for placing with Budbecks the Atalantis in the North, as well as the pillars of Hercules, and maintaining, that North America has been peopled from Scandinavia, than by sending thither the Moors from the coast of Africa. On the other hand, Gomara and John de Lery make the Americans come from the Canaanites, driven out of the promised land by Joshua: Some, on the contrary, make those Israelites, whom *R. 46.* Salmanazus led captive into Media, pass into America by the North of Asia. But Thevet, who believed, like them, that the Israelites peopled the new world, concludes, that they must have spread themselves over the whole world, from the circumstance of the finding a tomb with Hebrew characters on it in one of the Azores or western islands. This author was misinformed as to the fact. It was not a tomb that was discovered in Corvo, the most northernly of those islands, but an equestrian statue, erected upon a pedestal, on which were certain characters, which could not be deciphered.

Augustine Torniel is of opinion, that the descendants of Shem and Japhet have passed to America, and from thence to the countries lying to the southward of the streights of Magellan, by the way of Japan, and the Continent, to the Northward of the Archipel, or cluster of islands. A Sicilian, whose name is Marinocus, makes no doubt of the Romans having sent a Colony into this country, for which he has no other reason, than a report current in his time, that a medal of Augustus was found in one of the mines of Peru ; as if it had not been more natural to suppose, that some Spaniard had accidentally dropt this medal, when visiting these mines. Paulus Jovius has dreamt that the Mexicans have been among the Gauls, which ridiculous opinion he founds upon the human sacrifices which those two nations offered to their false divinities. But if this pretended resemblance proves any thing, it would much rather prove that the Gauls had been in Mexico, a people whom we know to have been always of a wandering disposition, and to have peopled many provinces by the colonies they sent out,

The Friselanders have likewise had their partisans with respect to the origin of the Americans. Juffridus Petri and Hamconius assert, that the inhabitants of Peru and Chili came from Friseland. James Charron and William Postel do the same honour to the Gauls, Abraham Milius to the antient Celtæ, Father Kirker to the Egyptians, and Robert Le Compte to the Phenicians ; every one of them at the same time excluding all the rest. I pass by a great many other opinions, still less tenable than the foregoing, equally founded on simple conjecture, and void of all probability, to come to those who have made the deepest researches into this affair.

The first is Father Gregorio Garcia, a Spanish Dominican, who having been a long time employed in the missions of Peru and Mexico, published at Valencia in the year 1607, a treatise in Spanish, on *the Origin of the Indians of the New World*, where he both collects and examines a great number of different opinions on this subject. He proposes every opinion, as if it were some thesis or question in philosophy: names its authors and advocates, sets down the arguments, and lastly, answers the objections, but gives no decision. To these he has added the traditions of the Peruvians, Mexicans, and islanders of *Haiti*, or Hispaniola, all which he was informed of, when on the spot. In the sequel, he gives his own opinion, which is, that several different nations have contributed to the peopling of America: and here I think he might have stopt. This opinion is somewhat more than probable, and it appears to me, that he ought to have been contented with supporting it, as he does, with some arguments drawn from that variety of characters, customs, languages and religions, observable in the different countries of the new world. But he admits such a number of these, which the authors of other opinions had before made use of, that instead of strengthening, he really weakens his own. In the year 1729, Don André Gonzales de Garcia reprinted the work of this Father at Madrid, with considerable augmentations; but though he has made many learned additions to it, he has contributed nothing to the farther satisfaction of his readers.

The second is Father Joseph de Acosta, a Spanish Jesuit, who had likewise spent a great part of his life-time in America, and has left behind him two very valuable works; one in the Castilian language, intituled, *The natural and moral History of the Indians*;

*dies* ; the other in Latin, the title of which is, *De promulgando Evangelio apud Barbaros, sive de procuranda Indorum salute*. This author, in the first book of his history, after taking notice of the opinion of Parmenides, Aristotle, and Pliny, who believed there were no inhabitants between the Tropicks, and that there never had been any navigation farther to the westward of Africa than the Canary Islands, gives it as his opinion, that the pretended prophecy of Medea in Seneca, could be no more than a bare conjecture of that poet, who, seeing that the art of navigation was beginning to receive considerable improvements, and not being able to persuade himself that there was no land beyond the Western Ocean, imagined that in a short time some discoveries would be made on that side of the globe. At the same time, this Spanish historian looks upon the passage I have already cited from the Timæus of Plato, as a mere fiction, in which, in order to save his reputation, the disciples of that philosopher, zealous for his glory, strained their imagination to find out some ingenious allegory.

In his sixteenth chapter, Father Acosta begins to examine by what means the first inhabitants of America might have found a passage to that immense Continent, and at the first view he rejects the direct and premeditated way of the sea, because no ancient author has made mention of the compass. However, he sees no improbability in saying, that some vessels might have been thrown upon the coast of America by stress of weather, and on this occasion he mentions \*, as a certain fact, the story of a pilot, driven by a tempest on the Brazils, who,

\* Chap. xix.



at his death, left his memoirs to Christopher Columbus. Afterwards, he takes notice of what Pliny relates concerning some Indians, who being driven by bad weather on the coast of Germany, were given in a present to Quintus Metellus Celer, by the king of the Suevi. In the same manner, he finds nothing improbable in the report which goes under Aristotle's name, *viz.* that a Carthaginian vessel having been driven very far to the westward by a strong easterly wind, the people on board discovered lands, which had, till that time, been unknown; and from those facts he concludes, that, according to all appearance, America has, by such like means, received one part of its inhabitants; but adds, that we must of necessity have recourse to some other way to people that quarter of the world, were it only to account for the transportation of certain animals found in those parts, which we cannot reasonably suppose to have been embarked on board of ships, or to have made so long a passage by swimming.

The way by which this has been done, continues father Acoſta, could only be by the north of Asia or Europe, or by the regions lying to the southward of the straits of Magellan; and, were only one of these three passages practicable, we may sufficiently comprehend how America has been peopled by degrees, without having recourse to navigation, of which there are no traces in the traditions of the Americans. In order to strengthen this argument, he observes, that those islands, such as Bermudas, which were too remote from the Continent to suppose that such small vessels as were used in that part of the world could find their way thither, were upon their first discovery uninhabited; that the Peruvians testified an extreme surprize at the first sight of ships on their coasts;



coasts; and that those animals, such as tygers and lions, which might probably have got thither by land, or at most by traversing small arms of the sea, were altogether unknown even in the best peopled islands of that hemisphere.

In chapter twenty-second, he returns to the Atlantis of Plato, and refutes, with a great deal of gravity, the notion of some who believed the reality of this chimera, and who fancied, that there was but a very short passage from this imaginary island to America. In the following chapter, he rejects the opinion of those who have advanced on the authority of the fourth book of Esdras, that this vast country was peopled by the Hebrews. To these he objects, First, that the Hebrews were acquainted with the use of characters, which no nation of America ever was. Secondly, that these latter held silver in no manner of estimation, whereas the former have always sought after it with extreme avidity. Thirdly, that the descendants of Abraham have constantly observed the law of circumcision, which is practised in no part of America. Fourthly, that they have always preserved with the greatest care their language, tradition, laws and ceremonies; that they have always, without ceasing, looked for the coming of the Messiah; that ever since their dispersion over all the earth, they have never in the least relaxed from all those particulars; and that there is no reason to believe they should have renounced them in America, where not the smallest vestige of them remains.

In the twenty-fourth chapter, he observes, that in a discussion of this nature, it is much easier to refute the system of others than to establish any new one, and that the want of writing and certain

tain traditions, have rendered the discovery of the origin of the Americans extremely difficult, so that nothing could be determined in it without being guilty of great temerity ; and that all that can be allowed to the uncertainty of conjecture is, that this great continent has been peopled by degrees in the way we have just now mentioned ; that he cannot believe these transmigrations to be very antient, and that according to all human appearance the first who attempted this passage were hunters, or wandering nations, rather than a civilized people ; but even granting the first inhabitants of the new world to have been such, there would be but little cause to wonder, that their descendants should degenerate and vary from the religion and manners of their ancestors : that the want of several things was enough to make them forget the use of them, and that for want of certain helps for transmitting their traditions from age to age, they should come by degrees altogether to forget them, or at least to disfigure them in such manner as to render it impossible to distinguish them : That the example of several nations of Spain and Italy, who seem to have had nothing belonging to the human species besides the figure, gives all these reasons a great air of probability : That the deluge, of which the Americans have preserved the remembrance, does not appear to him to be that spoken of in scripture, but some particular inundation, whereof some persons of great ability pretend there still remain certain marks in America : Lastly, that it cannot be proved, that the most ancient monuments in America are older than the thirteenth or fourteenth century, and that all beyond this is nothing but a confused heap of fables and tales, and those so very childish as to render it impossible to form one reasonable conjecture from them.

The

The third author John de Laët, whose opinion I ought to relate, acknowledges that there is a great deal of good sense and solid reasoning in that of father de Acoſta. What he does not approve of is what follows. Firſt, he pretends that the Jeſuit is in the wrong to ſuppoſe that long paſſages by ſea cannot be made, without the help of the needle, ſince we may navigate by the help of the ſtars only ; and, that he even ſeems to contradict himſelf, by aſſerting that the compaſs is a late invention, after telling us, that the uſe of it was very antient on the coaſt of Mozambique in the fifteenth Century ; that he advances without proof that the Orientals were unacquainted with it, till it had been found out by the people of the weſt ; laſtly, that it was very evident either that we could do without it, or that it muſt have been known in the earlieſt times, ſince ſeveral iſlands, even of our hemisphere, and thoſe at a conſiderable diſtance from the continent, were peopled very ſoon after the deluge.

Secondly, that he relates as a thing certain, the ſtory of the Pilot, from whoſe memoirs it is pretended Chriſtopher Columbus learned the route of the New World, as alſo that of the Indians ſent to Metellus Celer by the king of the Suevi ; that we know that the Spaniards ſpread abroad the firſt report merely out of jealousy of that great man to whom they owed the obligation of having put them in poſſeſſion of ſo many rich countries, and whoſe only miſfortune it was not to have been born in Spain ; and that the occaſion of their publiſhing the ſecond was only to rob the Portugueſe of the glory of having firſt opened a way to the Indies by ſailing round Africa ; that he is deceived if he thinks it poſſible to make the paſſage from Terra Australis to the Streights of Magellan, without croſſing the ſea,



sea, the discovery of the Streights of Le Maire having shewn its utter impracticability. The error of Father de Acoſta, if it is one, was, however, excuſable, as at the time when he wrote Le Maire had not as yet diſcovered the Streights which bear his name.

Thirdly, That he makes the peopling of America too late; and that it is contrary to all probability, that this vaſt Continent, and ſome of the iſlands which ſurround it, ſhould have ſo great a number of inhabitants at the end of the fifteenth century, had they only begun to be inhabited two hundred years ſince. John de Laët pretends, that there is no reaſon to think, that the Deluge, the tradition of which is ſtill preſerved amongſt the Americans, is not the univerſal deluge which Moſes mentions in the book of Geſeſis.

Befides the Spaniſh Jeſuit, three other writers, a Frenchman, an Engliſhman, and a Dutchman, who have handled the ſame topick, have paſſed under the examination of this learned Fleming. Theſe are Leſcarbot, Brerewood, and the famous Grotius. He probably knew nothing of the work of Father Garcia, whereof I have already ſpoken, no more than of that of John de Solorzano Pereyra, a Spaniſh lawyer, entituled, *De Jure Indiarum*; whereof the firſt volume, in which the author relates all the opinions of the learned on the origin of the Americans, was printed in 1629.

Be this as it will, Mark Leſcarbot, advocate in the parliament of Paris, was a man of ſenſe and learning, but a little addiſted to the marvellous. I have ſpoken of him in ſeveral places of my hiſtory. In relating the different opinions on the preſent queſtion,

tion, which were in vogue in his time, he rejects, as frivolous, the applications made of certain prophecies on this subject, and especially that of Abdias, which had been applied to the conversion of the West-Indies by the ministry of the French and Spaniards, the only nations who have truly undertaken this great work ; for the Portuguese, to whom the Brazils owe their conversion, may be comprehended under the name of Spaniards, and the missionaries of the other nations of Europe who have had a share in the publication of the gospel in the new World, went thither under the banner of the crowns of France, Spain, and Portugal. In fact, Abdias could possibly have had the Idumeans only in view, and there is not a single word in his prophecy that can be applied to America with any degree of probability.

Lescarbot leans somewhat more towards the sentiment of those who have transported into the new world the Canaanites, who were driven out of the promised land by Joshua. He thinks there is at least some probability in this notion, because these nations, as well as the Americans, were accustomed to make their children pass through the fire, and to feed upon human flesh, whilst they invoked their idols. He approves what Father Acosta says of the accidents which might have caused certain ships to land in America, and also with respect to the passage by the north of Asia and Europe. He believes that all the parts of the Continent are contiguous, or at least, that if there be any Streight to pass, like that of Magellan, which he supposes separates two Continents from each other, the animals which are to be found in the New World might have made their passage good notwithstanding, since Jacques Cartier saw a bear, as large as a cow, swim over an arm

arm of the sea fourteen leagues in breadth. Lastly, he proposes his own opinion, which he seems to give only by way of simple conjecture.

Is it, says he, to be believed, that Noah, who lived three hundred and fifty years after the Deluge, should be ignorant that a great part of the world lay beyond the western ocean; and if he did know it, could be destitute of means to people it? Was it more difficult to pass from the Canaries to the Azores, and from thence to Canada, or from the Cape Verd islands to Brazil, than from the Continent of Asia to Japan, or to other islands still more remote? On this occasion he relates, all that the antients, and especially Ælian and Plato, have said of those vestiges, which according to him still remained in their time, with respect to the knowledge of America. He sees nothing to hinder us from saying, that the Hesperides of the ancients were the same with the islands of the Antilles; and he explains the fable of the Dragon, which according to the poets guarded the golden apples, to be the different streights winding in a serpent-like manner round those islands, and which the frequency of the shipwrecks might have caused to be looked upon as unnavigable. To this he adds many geographical observations, which are far from being altogether exact, and which John de Laët very well refutes.

The same critick justly remarks, that if the Canaanites sacrificed their children to their idols, we, however, read in no place of the scripture of their being Anthropophagi. He acknowledges the possibility and probability of the passage of men and animals into America by the North; and confesses, that it is easy to conceive that men thus transplanted into a desert and remote country should there  
become



become savage and barbarous ; but he looks upon it as a real and most ridiculous paradox to suppose that Noah ever entertained any thoughts of peopling that immense Continent. The ill-humour he is in, and which is no doubt excited by some of Lescarbot's arguments, which to tell truth, are far from being without alloy, hinders him from seeing what is solid and sensible in this conjecture. But this proceeding is common enough to the learned ; as if truth and probability ceased to be such from the mixture of real proofs amongst those others by which they may happen to be supported.

Edward Brerewood, a learned Englishman, after having refuted the ill-grounded opinion, which makes all the Tartars descend from the Israelites, and after showing that the ignorance of the true etymology of the name of Tartar, which comes neither from the Hebrew nor the Syriack, but from the river Tartar, will have the New World to have been entirely peopled from this numerous nation ; his proofs are these following. First, America has always been better peopled on the side towards Asia, than on that towards Europe. Secondly, the genius of the Americans has a very great conformity with that of the Tartars, who never applied themselves to any art ; which is, however, not universally true. Thirdly, the colour of both is pretty much alike ; it is certain, the difference is not considerable, and is, perhaps, the effect of the climate, and of those mixtures with which the Americans rub themselves. Fourthly, the wild beasts that are seen in America, and which cannot reasonably be supposed to have been transported thither by sea, could only have come by the way of Tartary. Lastly, he answers an objection made to him with respect to the circumcision of the Tartars, and maintains, that this  
rite

rite was never in use with that nation, till after they had embraced the Mahometan religion.

De Laët is contented with barely narrating the opinion of this learned Englishman, which consists in rejecting the notion of those who make the Tartars descendants of the Israelites, who were transported by Salmanasar ; and in making the Tartars ancestors to all the Americans. We shall see what he himself thinks, when we come to relate his own opinions on this article. But it is necessary in the first place, to examine what passed between him and the famous Grotius upon this subject. The dispute was very hot on both sides, and as is usual in such cases, only embroiled the question.

In the year 1642, Grotius published a small treatise in *Quarto*, intituled, *De Origine Gentium Americanarum*, which he begins, with supposing that the Isthmus of Panama had been looked upon, before the discovery of the new world by the Spaniards, as an impenetrable barrier between the two continents of America : whence he concludes, that the inhabitants of both could have nothing common in their original. Milius, whom he does not cite, had advanced this paradox before him. Now, if we may credit the learned Dutchman, excepting Yucatan, and some other neighbouring provinces, whereof he makes a class apart, the whole of North America has been peopled by the Norwegians, who passed thither by way of Iceland, Greenland, Estotiland and Narembega. He, notwithstanding, confesses, that they were followed some ages after by the Danes, Swedes, and other German nations.

He draws the greatest part of his proofs from the conformity of their manners, and the resemblance  
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of names. But we must acknowledge, that nothing can be farther fetched than these pretended resemblances, of which he seems, notwithstanding, fully persuaded, though very few will be convinced besides himself. What obliges him to place Yucatan apart by itself, is the custom of circumcision, of which he has taken it into his head to believe, he has found some traces in this province, and a pretended ancient tradition amongst the inhabitants, which said, that their ancestors had escaped being swallowed up by the waves of the sea; and this according to him is what gave rise to the opinion of some that they were descended from the Hebrews. Notwithstanding he refutes this opinion, with much the same arguments which Brerewood made use of, and believes with Don Peter Martyr d'Anglerie, that the first who peopled Yucatan were some Ethiopians cast away on this coast by a tempest, or by some other accident. He is even of opinion, that these Ethiopians were Christians, a conjecture which he infers from a kind of baptism in use in the country. He could not help allowing that the language of the northern Americans is quite different from either the Ethiopian or Norwegian, but this difficulty does not stop his career; he searches in the best manner he can for a solution to it, in the mixture of different nations, who, in process of time, established themselves in this part of the New World, and in their wandering way of life, and which according to him reduced them to the necessity of inventing new jargons.

Hence he passes to the nations in the neighbourhood of the Straights of Magellan, and imagining he has found a strong resemblance between those settled on this side of it in the Continent of South-America, and those who have their abode beyond

it, he gives it as his decision that the former derive their original from the latter, and that these as well as the inhabitants of New Guinea have come from the Moluccoes and the island of Java. Yet for all that the peculiar genius of the Peruvians, their laws, their customs, their police, the superb edifices they had built, and the wrecks of Chinese vessels, which, he says, the Spaniards found at the entry of the Pacifick Ocean, after coming through the Straits of Magellan, permit him not to doubt that this nation is, originally, a Chinese colony, which is confirmed, adds he, by the worship of the Sun, which prevails equally in both empires, by the resemblance of their characters and manner of writing, and by the reputation of the ancient Chinese of excelling in the art of navigation. Lastly, he rejects the Tartar or Scythian original of the Americans from the little conformity that is found according to him between the manners and customs of both nations: He insists chiefly on the circumstance of the Americans having no horses, which we know, says he, the Scythians cannot be without. To destroy this system, it will be sufficient to prove, that it leads constantly to false conclusions, a point, which the Flemish critick has rendered extremely evident. He proves with equal clearness, that Grotius is every whit as unhappy in attacking the opinions of others, as he is in establishing his own. In effect, he proves that all the Scythians have not the use of horses, several of them inhabiting countries utterly incapable of maintaining them; to which he adds, that according to the opinion of those, who pretend that Scythia is not the country whence America has been peopled, it is not necessary to say, that all those who have penetrated that way into the New World were Scythians or Tartars; that the countries they must of necessity traverse, were no way proper for horses; that



that the custom of the Scythians, when they find themselves under the necessity of crossing an arm of the sea, is to kill their horses, to flea them, and to cover the boats in which they embark with their hides. Lastly, he maintains, that according to all appearance, these transmigrations happened very soon after the dispersion of Noah's grandsons, and that at that time, the Scythians and Tartars might as yet be unacquainted with the use of horses.

He proves the antiquity of these colonies by the multitude of people inhabiting North-America when it was first discovered; and as to the pretended impossibility of getting past the Isthmus of Panama, he shows the absurdity of it by the few obstacles the Europeans met with in that passage. He afterwards undertakes to shew, that the most northern Americans have much greater resemblance, not only in the features of their countenances, but also in their complexion, and in their manner of living, with the Scythians, Tartars, and Samoeides, than with the Norwegians and German nations: And with respect to what Grotius says, in making these pass from Iceland, he very well remarks, that this island began to be peopled only towards the end of the ninth century; that even then there passed only a few families thither, and that thus this island could not presently be in a condition to send over to America such numerous colonies as to have produced so many thousands of inhabitants as replenished those vast regions in the fifteenth century.

The route which Grotius makes his Norwegians take, likewise furnishes his adversary with dangerous weapons against him. He makes him observe, that Greenland is cut thorough with vast and deep arms of the sea, almost always frozen up, that the

whole country is covered with snows of a prodigious depth, and which are never entirely melted ; that Friezeland, if such a country is in being, can be no more than a part of Greenland, or of Iceland, and that there is no reliance to be had on all that the two Zani's have published about it : that Estotiland, according to the account of these two noble Venetians, is at a great distance from Friezeland, since in their time there was very little correspondence between these two countries, and that it was a matter of pure chance that some fishermen happened on this latter : that this enchanted kingdom, the monarch of which had such a magnificent library, has entirely disappeared since the discovery of the northern parts of America ; that Norembega, whither Grotius conducted his Norwegians, is no less fabulous ; that this name in which this learned man finds with a secret complacency so strong a conformity with that of Norvegia, or Norway, is not the name of any country, but a fictitious one whereof nobody knows the original ; that the natives of the country call it Agguncia ; that this country lies very far to the south of the place where Estotiland was supposed to be, since it makes part of the south-coast of New France, between Accadia and New-England.

Grotius had relied very much on the termination in *are*, so common in old and new Mexico. Laët draws him from this intrenchment, by shewing that almost all of these names are modern, and of Spanish extraction. He overthrows, with the same ease, the argument which Grotius drew from the traditions of the Mexicans, by observing, that when these nations placed themselves in the neighbourhood of the lake of Mexico, they found great numbers of barbarians, who spoke all sorts of languages, between



tween which there was no manner of affinity or analogy ; so that after having conquered them, they were obliged to make use of interpreters to be able to govern them. This frivolous resemblance of names likewise made Grotius imagine in California a nation called Alavard, which he makes descend from the Lombards ; Laët, in answer, says, that the name of Alavard, might possibly have no other original than that of *Alvarado*, a Spanish Captain, that had followed Ferdinand Cortez into Mexico, and perhaps too into California, of which we know this conqueror made the first discovery.

Laët, as he goes on, makes it appear, that Grotius is equally unsuccessful in his attempts to shew a conformity of manners, customs, traditions, and form of government, between the northern Americans and the Norwegians ; every thing he advances on that head being founded on false memoirs. He then proceeds to consider the argument which his antagonist draws from the pretended circumcision and baptism of the people of Yucatan. He maintains, that it is contrary to all probability to look out for a country surrounded by Norwegian colonies for a settlement to his Africans, who must have been much more naturally supposed to have landed in Brasil, or at least to have stopped at the Antilles, which islands they must have met with in their passage, supposing them to have crossed the line. He confesses that Don Peter Martyr d'Anglerie, when speaking of the people of Yucatan, affirms, that many of them were circumcised ; but he alleges, that this Italian author has been misinformed, since neither Antonio de Herrera, father de Acoſta, nor Oviedo, writers of much better credit than him, have ever mentioned the circumcision, baptism, or crosses upon the tombs of this people

but as meer fables. Lastly, before the Abyssinians could have passed to America, they must have taken their departure from the western coast of Africk; and Laët is confident, that the dominions of the king of Ethiopia do not extend so far that way. In the mean time, it is certain, from the accounts of the Portuguese, that the king of Benin had his crown of the emperor of Abyssinia.

Laët says but little of the manner in which Grotius imagines South-America has been peopled by the inhabitants of those countries, which lie to the southward of the Streights of Magellan; he is satisfied with observing that they are only islands, beyond which, as far as Terra Australis, there is nothing but an immense extent of ocean: that we are not as yet well acquainted with what lies between that country and New Guinea, and that all the southern American nations, not excepting those under the dominion of the incas of Peru, spoke an infinite variety of different languages. The reasons on which Grotius establishes the Chinese original of the Peruvians, appear no less frivolous to this critick.

In the first place, says he, the character of the two nations and their taste for the arts are extremely different. In the second place no one has ever said that the Chinese pay any religious adoration to the sun; and were this even granted, that worship is common to so many nations, that no arguments could be drawn from hence of any weight in the present question. It is true, that the incas of Peru, as well as the Chinese emperors, called themselves the descendants of the Sun; but how many other princes have either usurped themselves, or received that title from their subjects: Did not the Mexicans  
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give the same name to Cortez, either to do him honour, or because he came from the east: In the third place, Grotius is still more grossly mistaken in affirming that the Peruvians made use of characters like the Chinese, and which were written like theirs in perpendicular lines, seeing that Father Acosta, who resided a long time in Peru, and Garcilasso de la Vega, descended by the mother's side from the blood of the incas, inform us that they were neither acquainted with characters, nor had the use of any sort of writing. What is added by the learned Dutchman, that Mango Capa, the first of the incas, was himself a Chinese, is no more than a bare conjecture, or a fable invented by some traveller, there not being the least notice taken of it in the traditions of Peru.

In the last place, Laët declares that he has never, in any author, read of any wrecks of Chinese vessels in the Pacifick Ocean. The fact itself appears to him very improbable, because in the passage from China to Peru, the winds are contrary during the whole year so that by making the great round of the ocean by the west, would be a shorter passage, in point of time, than the direct course. He adds, that supposing the Peruvians had descended from the Chinese, they must have preserved at least some vestiges of the art of navigation, or of the use of iron, whereas they were acquainted with neither; so that it is much more natural to suppose the Peruvians and their neighbours, the inhabitants of Chili, came from some of the Indian nations, some of which have always been sufficiently civilized to be capable of giving birth to an empire such as was that of Peru.

To this Grotius makes answer, but with the air of the ambassador, and of a person of profound learning, and seems perfectly astonished, that any one should dare to contradict him. Laët, somewhat piqued at this behaviour, treats him in his reply with less ceremony than before ; and maintains, that in a dispute purely literary, the character of an ambassador neither gives one writer any manner of advantage over another, nor any additional weight to his reasoning.

Grotius triumphed upon his adversary's agreeing that Greenland had been peopled by the Norwegians : See here, said he, one part of America, the inhabitants of which derive their origin from Norway. Now what could have hindered these Norwegian Greenlanders from advancing farther ? The question is not, answered Laët, to determine, Whether or not any of the Northern people passed to America by the way of Greenland ; but if all the Americans came from Norway, which I maintain to be impossible. Angrimus Jonas, an Icelander, affirms, that Greenland was not discovered till the year 964. Gomara and Herrera inform us, that the Chichimeques were settled on the lake of Mexico, in 721. These savages came from New Mexico, and the neighbourhood of California, such is the uniform tradition of the Mexicans : consequently North-America was inhabited many ages before it could receive any from Norway by the way of Greenland.

It is no less certain, that the real Mexicans founded their empire in 902, after having subdued the Chichimeques, Otomias, and other barbarous nations, who had taken possession of the country round the lake of Mexico ; and Father Acosta tells us,  
each



each of them spoke a language peculiar to themselves. From other authorities we learn, that the Mexicans themselves came from California, or from New Mexico, and that they performed their journey at least for the most part by land ; consequently, they could not have come from Norway.

Grotius having thus set out with an evident anachronism, every thing he has built on that foundation is a consequence of that original error ; and his antagonist, who, with all the liberty of a Fleming, imagined he had a right to consider him only as a man of letters, whose system appeared to him erroneous ; and offended at the same time, because having attacked him with sufficient moderation, he had not met with the polite return he expected, fails not to pursue him through all his blunders, and to place them continually before his eyes.

The learned embassador imagined he had read in *Herrera*, that the islanders of *Baccalaos* bore a perfect resemblance to the Laplanders. Laët, after declaring he could meet with no such fact in the Spanish historian, repeats what he had already said, that he does not deny but some of the Americans might have had their original from Europe ; then bringing his adversary back to Mexico, he asks him what connection there was between the Mexicans and the inhabitants of the island Baccalaôs ? He acknowledges afterwards, that *Herrera* mentions a sort of baptism and confession, that were practised in Yucatan and the neighbouring islands ; but he maintains, that the worship of those barbarians was mixed with so many impieties, and those so plainly idolatrous, that it could not reasonably be supposed to be derived from the Abyssinian Christians. He  
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adds, that it is much more natural to attribute all those equivocal marks of Christianity and Judaism, which have been believed to subsist in divers provinces of the New World, to the Devil, who has always affected to counterfeit the worship of the true God. This remark is made by all good authors, who have spoken of the religion of nations newly discovered, and is besides founded on the authority of the fathers of the church.

Grotius having advanced, without any hesitation, that the Ethiopians might in time have changed their colour in a climate not so sultry as that which they had quitted, Laët makes answer, that though Whites might possibly lose some of their colour, by removing to a warmer climate than that where they were born, yet that there is no example of the descendants of the Blacks becoming white in a cold country; and that the colour of the Negroes proceeds not solely from the heat of the sun, since the Brazilians, and many others inhabiting the same latitudes, have it not. Lastly, he takes notice of another error of Grotius, who suffered his prejudices to carry him so far, as to be persuaded that the Chinese were not acquainted with the art of printing before the arrival of the Portuguese in their country, that he might thereby obviate an objection which might have been started against his system of making the Peruvians descend from the Chinese.

There can nothing, in my opinion, be added to the criticism, which John de Laët has published on the hypothesis of the celebrated Grotius. We are now going to see whether he has been equally happy in establishing his own. He sets out with relating, on the authority of some authors quoted by Pliny, but who do not appear to have been very able geographers,

graphers, that in some islands near the coast of Africa, amongst which are the Canaries, some ancient edifices have been seen, and which are a certain proof that these islands were inhabited before they were discovered by the Europeans : now it is certain, says he, that since they were afterwards entirely deserted, the inhabitants must have retired elsewhere ; and there is great reason to believe that they passed over to America, the passage being neither long nor difficult.

This migration, according to the calculation of these authors, must have happened about two thousand years ago : at that time, the Spaniards were much infested by the Carthaginians, and a short while afterwards, no less so by the Romans. Now is it not natural to think, that several amongst those should bethink themselves of taking refuge in a country, where they might have nothing to fear from the ambition of their enemies ; and what could have hindered them from retiring to the Antilles by way of the western islands, which are situated exactly half way in that voyage ? the vessels of the Carthaginians were very proper for this navigation, and might very well serve the Spaniards for models, by which to build others of the same construction. They had the still recent example of Hanno, the famous Carthaginian, before their eyes, who had sailed very far to the westward. It is no less probable, that people might have crossed from the Cape Verd Islands to Brazil. The Autololes, whom Pliny has placed in their neighbourhood, were Getulians, and not Ethiopians ; their colour and manners sufficiently correspond with those of the Brasilians.

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Great Britain, Ireland, and the Orcades, appear also to the learned Fleming, extremely proper for founding a like conjecture in favour of North America; he relates on this head, what is recorded in the history of Wales, written by Dr. David Powel, under the year 1170. Madoc, says this historian, one of the sons of prince Owen Gwynnith, being tired and disgusted with the civil wars which broke out between his brothers after the death of their father, fitted out several vessels, and after providing them with every thing necessary for a long voyage, went in quest of new lands to the westward of Ireland; there he discovered very fertile countries, and destitute of inhabitants; wherefore, landing a part of his people, he returned to Britain, where he made new levies, and afterwards transported them to his colony. Laët seems to rely much on this story, and concludes from it, that the like enterprizes might possibly have been carried into execution from all the Britannic islands. It were to be wished, adds he, that some persons had applied themselves to compare the languages of some parts of America with those of Ireland and Wales.

From thence he comes to the Scythians, and draws a parallel of their manners with those of the Scythians; first, he proves, by the testimony of Pliny, that this name was formerly common to all the nations living in the north of Asia and Europe; that it was even sometimes given to the Sarmatians and Germans, although it was afterwards restrained to the nations inhabiting the northern extremities of the two continents, where several of them have been for a long time unknown to the rest of the world. He pretends, that amongst those, many were Anthropophagi, that all of them might have sent colonies into America; and that if it be objected,

ed, that there never were any Anthropophagi, except in South America, it is because all those nations, amongst whom this detestable custom prevailed, passed thither. He might, no doubt, have saved himself the labour of making so weak an answer to an objection, which no person would probably ever have made, since several of the North Americans have ever been, and still are, Anthropophagi: but let us proceed to follow him in the explication of his hypothesis. I call it hypothesis, because where memoirs are wanting for establishing the truth, he is reduced, like all those who have handled this question, to the necessity of having recourse to probability, and it must be esteemed sufficient to keep within sight of it.

Pliny indeed, says, that the Scythians valued themselves for having many horses; but he does not say, that all the Scythians did so. Strabo mentions several nations of them living north of the Caspian Sea, and part of whom led a wandering life: what he says of their manners and way of living, agrees, in a great many circumstances, with what has been remarked in the Indians of America: now it is no great miracle, adds Laët, that these resemblances are not absolutely perfect; and those people, even before they left their own country, already differed from each other, and went not by the same name: their change of abode effected what remained. We find the same likeness between several American nations and the Samoeides, settled on the great river Oby, such as the Russians have represented them to us; and it is much more natural to suppose, that colonies of these nations passed over to America, by crossing the icy sea on their sledges, than to cause the Norwegians to travel all the way that Grotius has marked out for them.



them. Besides that the Americans have much less resemblance to these, than to the Samoeides and the Scythian Nomades.

From North, Laët passes to South America, and examines whether that continent could have received part of its inhabitants by way of the Pacifick Ocean. The Islands of Solomon are situated eight hundred leagues from the coasts of Peru, and we now know them to be separated from Terra Australis by a sea, the extent of which is not as yet fully ascertained. Father de Acoſta believes it to be not very distant from New Guinea, which he imagines is a continent. But Sir Richard Hawkins, an Englishman, pretends to have certainly discovered it to be an island. We must therefore, continues the learned Fleming, say that South America has been peopled by way of this great continent of Terra Australis, and the coast of which, Don Pedro Hernando Giros, a Portuguese, and Don Hernando de Quiros, a Spaniard, ranged along for the space of eight hundred leagues in the years 1609 and 1610. The latter, who has given his name to part of this continent, observes in his letter to his Catholick Majesty, that this country, in several places where he landed, was extremely well peopled, and that too with men of all complexions. But is it not strange, that Laët should rather chuse to people South America from a country, separated from it by a much greater extent of ocean than the rest of the world, than from North America, which, on the supposition that it was first peopled, ought naturally to have supplied all the New World with inhabitants?

In order to support his assertion, that America could not have been peopled by means of the Pacifick Ocean, he observes, that easterly winds, which  
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constantly prevail there, prevent all navigation from the West to the East ; then he examines several American languages, in order to compare them with one another, which is not the best part of his work, at least, if we may form a judgment from the extract he has given us of a vocabulary of the Haron language, in order to compare it with that of Mexico ; for he has taken it from brother Gabriel Saghart, a Recollet, who understood very little of that tongue.

He does not appear to be better acquainted with the religion of the Indians of Canada, in which he endeavours to discover traces which might have led him to their first original ; and indeed, all this display of learning does not much conduce to the end he has in view : besides, although no one of his age has made a better connected work, or treated of the West Indies with so much accuracy, yet we now meet with several things in his performance, which stand in need of correction.

He concludes, with a short explication of the opinion of Emanuel de Moraez, a Portuguese, extracted from the twentieth book of his History of Brazil ; a work, which has not as yet been published. According to this author, America has been wholly peopled by the Carthaginians and Israelites. With regard to the first, his proof is, that they had made discoveries at a great distance from Africa, the progress of which being put a stop to by the senate of Carthage, hence it came to pass, that those who happened to be then in the newly discovered countries, being cut off from all commerce with their countrymen, and destitute of many necessaries of life, fell soon into a state of barbarity. As to the Israelites, Moraez pretends, that nothing but circumcision is wanting, in order to constitute a  
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perfect resemblance between them and the Brazilians. Even this would be of great importance, were we to consider the invincible attachment of the former to that ceremony. But there are many other points equally essential, wherein the two nations differ. I can safely affirm, that this pretended resemblance, which appears so striking to the Portuguese historian, is at best a false show, which seizes one at the first glance, but disappears, when looked into more narrowly and without prejudice.

John de Laët having, in a satisfactory manner, refuted what opinions had been advanced before his time, but not having been equally successful in establishing his own, George de Hornn, a learned Dutchman, entered the lists, which he did with the greater confidence, as he believed he should draw great advantages from the new discoveries his countrymen and the English had lately made in the northern parts of Asia, Europe, and America.

After relating every thing that has been imagined on the subject he undertakes to handle, that is to say, all that is found in father Garcia and Solorzano, he sets in the strongest light the difficulty of determining this question; a difficulty occasioned by the imperfect knowledge we have of the extremities of the globe towards the North and South, and the havoc which the Spaniards, the first discoverers of the New World, made amongst its most ancient monuments; as witness the great double road between Quito and Cuzco; such an undertaking, as the Romans have executed nothing that can be compared to it. However, he is not afraid to promise himself a happy conclusion to his enquiries, and condemns father Acosta for too hastily determining, that no one can engage to succeed  
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in such an enterprize, without great rashness. Let us now see whether he himself is not an example of what he finds fault with in the Spanish historian.

He sets out with declaring, that he does not believe it possible America could have been peopled before the flood, considering the short space of time which elapsed between the creation of the world and that memorable event. Very able men have, notwithstanding, believed that there were more men on the face of the earth at that early period, than there are at this present; the thing is at least possible, and this is sufficient to prevent the destroying the absolute certainty of the opinion. Nevertheless, it must be owned, that de Hornn is not single in this opinion; but what he adds, gives us no great notion either of his accuracy or of his probity. According to him, Lescarbot places Noah's birth in the New World; whereas, this French historian has said nothing that bears the smallest resemblance to such a paradox.

In the next place, he lays it down for a principle, that after the deluge, men and other terrestrial animals have penetrated into America both by land and by water, and both too out of a formed design, and by accident; and that birds have got thither by flight, which does not appear to be improbable, seeing that they have been observed to follow vessels without stopping, for the space of three hundred leagues together, and since there are rocks and islands, where they might rest themselves, scattered about every where in the ocean. Thus, according to him, John de Laët had reason to say, that the article of birds occasioned no manner of difficulty. All the world, however, will not be of their opinion; for do not we know many of the fea-  
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thered species, which are neither able to fly nor to swim so far? Father Acofta has likewise very well observed, in the opinion of this learned Dutchman, that wild beafts might have found a free paffage by land, and that if we do not meet in the New World with horfes or cattle, to which he might have added, elephants, camels, rhinoceros's, and many others; it is becaufe thofe nations who paffed thither, either were not acquainted with their ufe, or had no convenience to transport them: yet there are cattle in America, but of a fpecies very different from any of thofe known in our hemisphere.

As to what relates to the human fpecies, de Hornn excludes from America, 1. The Ethiopians, and all the Blacks, both of Africa and Asia; the few Negroes found in the province of Careta, having, without doubt, been brought there by accident, a fhort time before. 2. The Norwegians, Danes, Swedes, Celtes, and in a word, all the northern and middle countries of Europe and Asia. Mean while it may be obferved, the Celtes and ancient Britons were much addicted to navigation, and as likely as any other people to transport themfelves to America. 3. The Samoeides and Laplanders. His reason for excluding all thefe nations is this, that there are no Americans who have white curled hair and beards, excepting the *Miges*, in the province of *Zapoteca*, the *Scheries*, on the river of *Plate*, and the *Maloques* in Brazil. The *Esquimaux* have likewise white hair; which exceptions embarrafs the question not a little.

All the Indians of Asia, continues de Hornn, believe the Metempsychosis: therefore that people could not have paffed into America, where this doctrine is not fo much as known. Yet good authors,



thors, and particularly the learned Koempfer, alledge that the doctrine of the Metempsychosis was first carried into India by Xaca, who was probably an Egyptian priest, driven from his native country by Cambyfes, when he conquered it. Before him, the religion of fire, and the worship of the sun, were spread all over Persia and the East Indies, both of which are of great antiquity in a good part of North America. Here follows another argument, which, though supported by the authority of Diodorus Siculus, does not appear to me a whit more convincing. The Indians, say they, have never sent colonies abroad; consequently they could not have contributed to the peopling of the New World. But such general propositions are not susceptible of demonstration, especially with respect to such a country as the Indies, possessed by so many nations, differing from one another in manners, customs, and genius.

The Greeks and the Latins are likewise excluded from the New World. They could not, according to our author, sail beyond Cadiz, because the Carthaginians, who had the command of the Atlantick Ocean, would not have suffered them. This argument appears to me very weak, especially with regard to the Greeks, who having founded Cadiz, might very well be able to keep those seas in spite of the Carthaginians. I should rather imagine, that Hercules being persuaded that there was nothing beyond that ocean, his countrymen had never thought of embarking upon it, which, however, is a conjecture, that might easily be destroyed.

In the last place, neither Christians, Hebrews, nor Mahometans, if we believe de Hornn, have ever settled in the New World; and if this learned man does not absolutely reject those accounts of

crosses, baptism, circumcision, confession, fasts, and other religious ceremonies, some vestiges of which have been pretended to have been found in Yucatan and elsewhere, we shall soon see what regard he pays to them in the arrangement of his own system, of which here follows the plan.

In the first place, he supposes that America began to be peopled by the North; and regarding the barrier of the Isthmus of Panama, which Grotius imagines was not open before the time of the Spaniards, as a supposition void of all foundation, he maintains, that the primitive colonies spread themselves far beyond it, since through the whole extent of that continent, and both in the northern and southern parts of it, we meet with undoubted marks of a mixture of the northern nations with those who have come from other places. He believes that the first founders of those colonies were the Scythians; that the Phenicians and Carthaginians afterwards got footing in America by way of the Atlantick Ocean, and the Chinese by way of the Pacifick; and that other nations might, from time to time, have landed there by one or other of these ways, or might possibly have been thrown on the coast by tempests; and lastly, that some Jews and Christians might have been carried there by some such like event, but at a time when all the New World was already peopled.

He, in my opinion, very well observes, that those giants, who may have been seen in some parts of America, prove nothing; that though in the first ages, they might possibly have been more frequently met with, yet it cannot be said, they ever composed the body of a nation; that as their posterity did not all inherit their gigantic stature, so men of

a common size might have probably at first produced those Coloffus's, as may be seen in the modern accounts of Virginia and Senegal. Hitherto he has advanced nothing new, most of these observations having been made before : afterwards he has something, which is not only new, but which is also peculiar to himself ; he passes from probability to certainty, and from conjectures to positive assertions ; and this method once tried, he carries it to a great length ; so that if we follow him, we shall find him sufficiently entertaining, and at times saying very good things.

Omitting the consideration of the Scythians, whom he supposes to have entered America by the North, and there to have made the first settlements, he establishes a first migration of the Phenicians, by laying it down for a principle, that from the earliest times they have been great navigators, and have replenished all our hemisphere with their colonies : but it is to be observed, that under the name of the Phenicians, he likewise comprehends the Canaanites. From Strabo he learns, that the Phenicians sailed into the Atlantick Ocean, and built cities beyond the pillars of Hercules Appian, continues he, and Pausanias inform us, that the Carthaginians, who were originally Phenicians, covered all the ocean with their fleets ; that Hanno made the tour of Africk ; and that the Canaries were known to the ancients. We know, from other authorities, that the Phenicians, settled in Africa, waged long and bloody wars with the natives of the country, who destroyed above three hundred of their cities in Mauritania. Eratosthenes is his warrant for this, and he prefers the authority of that ancient writer to that of Strabo and Artemidorus, who contradict him. Whither could the Phenicians, adds he, have



retired, after so many and great losses, but to America ?

This migration being possible, he looks upon it of course as certain, and to have been very ancient ; but he laughs at Opmeer, who had advanced, that the Africans living in the neighbourhood of Mount Atlas, sailed to America before the deluge. He imagines Plato may possibly be mistaken in some things he has said of Atalantis, but that his description is notwithstanding founded on truth. He observes, that all those islands to the westward of Africa, have been called Atlantides, and he reckons it probable, that the Atalantis of Plato lay in America, and that it was drowned in a deluge, of which there still remain some slender traditions among the Americans. Further, he says, that according to Peter Martyr d'Anglerie, the inhabitants of the Antilles report, that all their islands were formerly joined to the continent, and had been separated from it by earthquakes and great inundations : that the vestiges of a deluge are found in Peru to this day, and that all South America is full of water. He might have added, that the north part of America, or New France, alone contains a greater quantity of water than all the rest of that vast continent besides.

Diodorus Siculus relates, that the Phenicians sailed far into the Atlantick Ocean, and that being constrained by tempestuous weather, they landed upon a large island, where they found a fruitful soil, navigable rivers, and magnificent edifices. De Hornn takes this to be the second migration of that people to America. Diodorus adds, that in the sequel the Phenicians being harrassed by the Carthaginians and the inhabitants of Mauritania, who  
would



would neither grant them peace nor a truce, sent colonies to that island, but kept the affair secret, in order that they might always have a secure retreat in case of necessity. Other authors, whom de Hornn does not mention, have alledged, that these voyages were carried on without the knowledge of the government, who, perceiving that the country began to diminish in the number of its inhabitants, and having found out the cause of this disorder, prohibited that navigation under very severe penalties.

The third and last migration of the Phenicians to the New World was occasioned, according to this author, by a three year's voyage, made by a Tyrian fleet in the service of Solomon. He asserts, on the authority of Josephus, that Esion Geber, where the embarkation was made, is a port in the Mediterranean. This fleet, he adds, went in quest of elephants teeth and peacocks to the western coast of Africa, which is *Tarfish*: this is likewise the opinion of Huet: then to *Ophir* for gold, which is *Haïti*, or the island Hispaniola: Christopher Columbus was of the same opinion, according to some, as Vetablus certainly was. De Hornn returning afterwards to the Atlantick islands, would fain persuade us, that the Phenicians have, at divers times, sent colonies thither, and that the *Cerné* of the ancients is Grand Canaria, for which name it is indebted to the Canaanites, who took refuge there,

One of the Canary Islands is called *Gomera*: de Hornn makes no doubt that it derives its name from the Amorites, who went to settle there after they had been driven out of Palestine by the Hebrews. Ought we to be surprized, if after this he finds the *Cham* of the Phenicians in the *Chemex* of

the island Haïti, in the *Camis* of Japan, and in the *Chile Cambal* of Yucatan ? The detail which he afterwards enters into, in order to discover traces of of the Phenician religion and manners in the New World, is pretty nearly in the same taste, and carries the same conviction along with it. But what ought not to be (he observes in this place) passed over in silence, is that the first Phenicians, who settled in Africa and the Balearick Islands, had neither any letters or characters, nor knew the use of them ; and that Cadmus, a Phenician, carried into Greece, not the characters which his countrymen afterwards made use of, but those which in his time were known among the Egyptians.

All those migrations preceded the Christian æra many ages : here follow such as are of a later date. Our author distinguishes three sorts of Scythians, who passed into the New World, namely, Huns, Tartars of Cathay, and the Chinese. Undoubtedly the partizans for the antiquity of the Chinese nation, will not excuse his making Scythians the founders of this great empire, neither will those, who reject what is doubtful in the pretensions of certain Chinese, be of his opinion ; for it is now past doubt, that the Chinese empire cannot be much later than Noah's grand-children. But we should never have done, were we to repeat all the false and arbitrary conjectures of this Dutch writer.

Under the name of Huns, he comprehends numberless nations, who possessed an immense country ; the occasion of the passage of many of them to America, was, according to him, their overgrown numbers, and the intestine wars raging amongst them. He pretends, that the route they made choice of, was by the extremity of the North, where they met with frozen seas. Then forgetting  
what

what he had just been saying of the infinite numbers of those barbarians, whose vast countries could no longer contain them; as he had already forgotten what he said at first, that the first settlements in America were composed of Scythians, he informs us, that the reason why the northern regions of America are so thinly inhabited, is, because it was very late before the country of the Huns was peopled at all, and that even at this day, they are far from being populous.

But did they all take the same road? No; for while the greatest number turned off to the right towards the East, those whom he calls *Finnes*, and the Samoeides and Carolians, whom Tacitus places in Finland, went off to the East by the westward, traversed Nova Zembla, Lapland and Greenland; whence he reckons that the Norwegians, who had before this time landed in Greenland, and whereof not one was to be found in the year 1348, penetrated into the northern parts of America in quest of more habitable countries. Nothing can reasonably hinder us from believing, that the *Eshimaux*, and some other nations in the neighbourhood of Hudson's Bay, draw their original from the Norwegians of Greenland, supposing such ever to have existed. What is certain, is, that the *Eshimaux* have nothing in common either in their language, manners, or way of living, complexion, or in the colour of their hair with the people of Canada proper, who are their nearest neighbours.

As to certain animals, such as lions and tigers, which, according to all appearance, have passed from Tartary and Hircania into the New World, their passage might very well serve for a proof, that the two hemispheres join to the northward of Asia; and  
this



this argument is not the only one we have of this circumstance, if what I have often heard related by father *Grollon*, a French jesuit, as undoubted matter of fact may be depended on. This father, say they, after having laboured some time in the missions of New France, passed over to those of China. One day as he was travelling in Tartary, he met a Huron woman, whom he had formerly known in Canada: he asked her, by what adventure she had been carried into a country so distant from her own? She made answer, that having been taken in war, she had been conducted from nation to nation, till she arrived at the place where she then was. I have been assured, that another jesuit passing by way of Nantz, in his return from China, had there related much such another affair of a Spanish woman of Florida: she had been taken by certain Indians, and given to those of a most distant country, and by these again to another nation, till she had thus been successively passed from country to country, had travelled regions extremely cold, and at last found herself in Tartary, and had there married a Tartar, who had passed with the conquerors into China, and there settled. It is indeed true, that those who have sailed farthest to the eastward of Asia, by pursuing the coasts of Jesso or Kamtschatka, have pretended to have perceived the extremity of this continent, thence concluding, that between Asia and America, there could possibly be no communication by land; but besides that, Francis Guella, a Spaniard, if we may believe John Hugh de Linschooten, hath confirmed, that this separation is no more than a streight, a hundred miles over; the last voyages of the Japanese give grounds to think that this streight is only a bay, above which there is a passage over land.

Let



Let us return to George de Hornn. This writer does not express himself with accuracy, when he tells us, that North America is full of lions and tigers. It is true, we find in the country of the Iroquoise, a kind of tigers, the hair of which is of a light grey, which are not spotted, but which have very long tails, and whose flesh is good eating : but except this, it is not till towards the Tropic that you begin to see true tigers and lions, which is, however, no proof that they could not have come from Tartary and Hircania ; but as by advancing always southwards, they met with climates more agreeable to their natures, we may believe they have therefore entirely abandoned the northern countries.

What Solinus and Pliny relate, that the Scythian Anthropophagi depopulated a great extent of country as far as the promontory *Tabin* ; and what Mark Pol, the Venetian, tells us, that to the north-east of China and Tartary, there are vast uninhabited countries, might be sufficient to confirm our author's conjecture concerning the retreat of a great number of Scythians into America. We find in the ancients the names of some of these nations : Pliny speaks of the Tabians : Solinus mentions the Apuleans ; who, he says, had for neighbours the Massagetes, and whom Pliny assures us to have entirely disappeared. Ammianus Marcellinus expressly says, that the fear of the Anthropophagi obliged several of the inhabitants of those countries to take refuge elsewhere. All these authorities form, in my opinion, at least a strong conjecture, that more than one nation of America have a Scythian or Tartar original.

Hitherto de Hornn keeps pretty close to his point, and is sure to return to it from time to time, and we discover the man of learning even in his greatest flights, but on the whole, one would say, that by dint of forming conjectures upon the agreement of names, he fails prodigiously in point of judgment. Who, for example, would not laugh to hear him seriously advance, that the Apalaches, a nation of Florida, are the Apaleans of Solinus, and that the Tabians of Ptolomy are the ancestors of the Tombas of Peru? What follows is still more ridiculous. There is, says he, a people, who are neighbours to the Moguls called Huyrons; these are the Hurons of Canada. Herodotus calls the Turks Yrcas; these are the Iroquoise and Souriquois of Arcadia. Unhappily for such rare discoveries, this conjecture leads to a false conclusion; all, or most of the names of the Indians of New France being of French extraction.

Nay more, the Hurons and Iroquoise, to whom our author gives so very different originals, speak almost the same language, the one being a dialect of the other; whereas the Souriquois, to whom Hornn gives the same ancestors as to the Iroquoise, have absolutely nothing in common with them either in their language or genius. The language they speak is a dialect of the Algonquin; and the Huron is as different from the Algonquin as the Latin is from the Hebrew. Must not one then have his imagination very strongly impressed to be able to persuade himself that the *Meyro Humona* of the Brasilians, and the *Paicuma* of the inhabitants of Santa Cruz come from St. Thomas, and are derived from the language of the Turks, who before they passed over to America, had some knowledge of this Apostle?

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Our author's usual confidence deserts him, when he seems to have most occasion for it, and he dares not decide whether South-America has peopled the Terra Australis, or whether that country may have thence received its own inhabitants; but he very soon recovers it, and by means of it undertakes to unravel the origin of the empires of Peru and Mexico. He agrees with several historians, that these monarchies were not very ancient when the Spaniards destroyed them, and that their founders had to fight against barbarous nations, that had been long settled in the country they had made choice of, and chiefly Mexico, where the manners were much more rugged in the time of Cortez, than they were amongst the Peruvians. This difference probably was owing to this, that the conquerors of Mexico were not so much civilized as those of Peru.

Both the one and the other, if we may believe Hornn, are, notwithstanding, originally from the same parts; these are, says he, the nations of Cathay; the Japonese, who are originally descended from thence, the Chinese, whom he always supposes to be descended from the Scythians; some Egyptians, and some Phenicians, from the time that these two empires attained to perfection, in policy, religion, and arts. Here is certainly a very miscellaneous and capricious original. But in fine, the learned Dutchman will have it, that all these nations have sent colonies into America, and to prove this, it is scarce conceivable, where he goes in quest of Cathayan, Corean, Chinese, and especially Japonese names, in all parts of the New World. Between these, there is often much the same relation as the *Alfana*, and *Equus* of Menage; but he likewise causes them to take so very long a journey, that

that we ought not to be surprized if they undergo very considerable changes by the way.

He even goes so far as to derive the name of the Chiquites of Paraguay, which is purely of Spanish extraction from that of Cathay. The name of Inca, which was that of the imperial family of Peru, has, according to him too great a resemblance with the same name of Cathay, to suffer any doubt that these sovereigns derive their original from this great country. In a word, to seek for the Cathayans in America, is, according to him, the same with searching for the Greeks in Italy, and the Phenicians in Africk. The Coreans called their country *Caoli* ; therefore, California has been peopled by a Corean Colony. *Chiapa*, a province of Mexico, whence can it come but from *Giapan*, a name which some give to the island of Japan? Montezuma, emperor of Mexico, had a beard after the Chinese fashion ; he wants no more to make him come originally from China. It is not, however, without some scruple, that our author quits his etymologies for the figure of the beard ; but this beard is very singular in a Mexican. He, moreover, finds that the name of monarch has a great affinity with that of Motuzajuma, which he pretends on I know not what authority, to be a title of honour in Japan : thus this prince might very well derive his original from these islands.

However, it is neither the Cathayans, nor the Japonese who have founded the Mexican monarchy : De Hornn ascribes that honour to Facfur, king of China, who being dethron'd by Cublay, great cham. of Tartary, fled with a hundred thousand Chinese, in a thousand vessels into America; and there became the founder of a new empire. Manco, another



ther Chinese prince, originally of Cathay, had two ages before founded that of Peru. Here are many names, of which the Fathers Couplet, Le Compte, and Du Halde were entirely ignorant. Manco had carried the arts to very great perfection, and it was he who reared those magnificent edifices which so much astonished the Spaniards. He brought no horses into America, because, in his time, says Mark Pol the Venetian, there were none in China. But it may be asked, why the Chinese of Peru have not preserved their characters? It is, answers Hornn, because they were too difficult to write; they found that it was a shorter and easier way to supply the use of them by symbolical figures.

This is a part of what has been written on the present question; and I am much mistaken if the bare setting down of so many different opinions is not sufficient to furnish the attentive reader with all the lights necessary to lead him to the choice of the proper side in this great controversy, which, by endeavouring to explain they have hitherto rendered only more obscure. It may be reduced as appears to me to the two following articles. 1. How the New World might have been peopled? 2. By whom and by what means it has been peopled.

Nothing it would seem may be more easily answered than the first. America might have been peopled, as the three other quarters of the world have been. Many difficulties have been formed upon this subject which have been deemed insolvable, but are far from being so. The inhabitants of both hemispheres are certainly the descendants of the same father. This common father of mankind received an express order from heaven to people the whole world, and accordingly it has been peopled.

To

To bring this about, it was necessary to overcome all difficulties in the way, and they have also been got over. Were those difficulties greater with respect to peopling the extremities of Asia, Africa, and Europe, and the transporting men into the islands, which lie at a considerable distance from those Continents, than to pass over into America? Certainly not. Navigation which has arrived at so great perfection within these three or four centuries, might possibly have been still more perfect in those first times than at this day. At least, we cannot doubt, but it was then arrived at such a degree of perfection as was necessary for the design which God had formed of peopling the whole earth.

Whilst those authors whom I have cited, have kept to this possibility which cannot be denied, they have reasoned very justly; for if it has not been demonstrated, that there is a passage into America over land, either by the north of Asia and Europe, or by the south, the contrary has not been made appear; besides, from the coast of Africa to Brazil; from the Canaries to the western Islands, from the western Islands to the Antilles; from the Britannic isles, and the coast of France to Newfoundland, the passage is neither long nor difficult: I might say as much of that from China to Japan, and from Japan and the Philippines to the *Isles Mariannes*, and from thence to Mexico. There are islands at a considerable distance from the Continent of Asia, where we have not been surprized to find inhabitants. Why then should we wonder to find people in America? And it cannot be imagined, that the grandsons of Noah, when they were obliged to separate and to spread themselves in conformity to the designs of God over the whole earth, should be in  
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an absolute impossibility of peopling almost one half of the globe?

They ought therefore to have kept to this; but the question was too simple and too easy to be answered. The learned must make disquisitions, and they imagined they were able to decide how and by whom America has been peopled; and as history furnished no materials for this purpose, rather than stop short they have realized the most frivolous conjectures. The simple resemblance of names, and some slight appearances, seemed, in their eyes, so many proofs, and on such ruinous foundations they have erected systems of which they have become enamoured, the weakness of which the most ignorant are able to perceive, and which are often overturned by one single fact which is incontestable. Hence it happens, that the manner in which the New World has received its first inhabitants remaining in very great uncertainty, they have imagined difficulties where none really were, and they have carried this extravagance to such a height, as to believe, that the Americans were not the descendants of our first parents; as if the ignorance of the manner in which a thing hath happened, ought to make us look upon it as impossible, or at least as extremely difficult.

But what is most singular in this, is, that they should have neglected the only means that remained to come at the truth of what they were in search of; I mean, the comparing the languages. In effect, in the research in question, it appears to me, that the knowledge of the principal languages of America, and the comparing them with those of our Hemisphere, that are looked upon as primitive, might possibly set us upon some happy discovery;

and that way of ascending to the original of nations, which is the least equivocal, is far from being so difficult as might be imagined. We have had, and still have travellers and missionaries, who have worked on the languages that are spoken in all the provinces of the New World. It would only be necessary to make a collection of their grammars and vocabularies, and to collate them with the dead and living languages of the Old World that pass for originals. Even the different dialects, in spite of the alterations they have undergone, still retain enough of the mother-tongue to furnish considerable lights.

Instead of this method, which has been neglected, they have made enquiries into the manners, customs, religion, and traditions of the Americans, in order to discover their original. Notwithstanding, I am persuaded, that this disquisition is only capable of producing a false light, more likely to dazzle, and to make us wander from the right path, than to lead us with certainty to the point proposed. Ancient traditions are effaced from the minds of such as have not, or, who, during several ages, have been, without any helps to preserve them; and half the world is exactly in this situation. New events, and a new arrangement of things give rise to new traditions, which efface the former, and are themselves effaced in their turn. After one or two centuries have passed, there no longer remain any marks capable of leading us to find the traces of the first traditions.

The manners very soon degenerate by means of commerce with foreigners, and by the mixture of several nations uniting in one body, and by a change of empire always accompanied with a new form of government. How much more reason is there to be-



believe such a sensible alteration of genius and manners amongst wandering nations become savage, living, without principles, laws, education, or civil government, which might serve to bring them back to the antient manners. Customs are still more easily destroyed. A new way of living introduces new customs, and those which have been forsaken are very soon forgotten. What shall I say of the absolute want of such things as are most necessary to life? And of which, the necessity of doing without, causes their names and use to perish together.

Lastly, nothing has undergone more sudden, frequent, or more surprizing revolutions than religion. When once men have abandoned the only true one, they soon lose it out of their sight, and find themselves entangled and bewildered in such a labyrinth of incoherent errors, inconsistency and contradiction being the natural inheritance of falshood, that there remains not the smallest thread to lead us back to the truth. We have seen a very sensible example of this in the last age. The Buccaneers of St. Domingo, who were christians, but who had no commerce except amongst themselves, in less than thirty years, and through the sole want of religious worship, instruction, and an authority capable of retaining them in their duty, had come to such a pass, as to have lost all marks of christianity, except baptism alone. Had these subsisted only to the third generation, their grandchildren would have been as void of christianity as the inhabitants of Terra Australis, or New-Guinea. They might possibly have preserved some ceremonies, the reason of which they could not have accounted for, and is it not precisely in the same manner, that so many infidel nations are found to have in their idolatrous

worship ceremonies which appear to have been copied after ours.

The case is not the same with respect to languages. I allow that a living language is subject to continual changes, and as all languages have been so, we may say with truth, that none of them have preserved their original purity. But it is no less true, that in spite of the changes, introduced by custom, they have not lost every thing by which they are distinguished from others, which is sufficient for our present purpose; and that from the rivulets, arising from the principal springs, I mean the dialects, we may ascend to the mother-tongues themselves; and that by attending to the observation of a learned academician\*, that mother-tongues are distinguished by being more nervous than those derived from them, because they are formed from nature; that they contain a greater number of words imitating the things whereof they are the signs; that they are less indebted to chance or hazard, and that that mixture which forms the dialects, always deprives them of some of that energy, which the natural connection of their sound with the things they represent always give them.

Hence, I conclude, that if those characteristic marks are found in the Americans languages, we cannot reasonably doubt of their being truly original; and, consequently, that the people who speak them have passed over into that hemisphere, a short time after the first dispersion of mankind; especially, if they are entirely unknown in our Continent. I have already observed, that it is an arbitrary supposition that the great grandchildren of Noah were

\* M. l'Abbé du Bos, *History of Painting and Poetry*.

not able to penetrate into the New World, or that they never thought of it. In effect, I see no reason that can justify such a notion. Who can seriously believe that Noah and his immediate descendants knew less than we do; that the builder and pilot of the greatest ship that ever was, a ship which was formed to traverse an unbounded ocean, and had so many shoals and quicksands to guard against, should be ignorant of, or should not have communicated to those of his descendants who survived him, and by whose means he was to execute the order of the great Creator, to people the universe, I say, who can believe he should not have communicated to them the art of sailing upon an ocean, which was not only more calm and pacifick, but at the same time confined within its ancient limits?

Is it even determined on sufficient grounds, that America had not inhabitants before the deluge? Is it probable, that Noah and his sons should have been acquainted with only one half of the world, and does not Moses inform us, that all, even the remotest Continents and islands were once peopled? How shall we reconcile this with the supposition of those who maintain, that the first men were ignorant of the art of navigation; and can it seriously be said, contrary to the authority of so respectable a testimony, as John de Laët has done, that navigation is an effect of the temerity of mankind; that it does not enter into the immediate views of the Creator, and that God has left the land to the human species, and the ocean to fishes? Besides, are not the islands a part of the earth, and are there not many places on the Continent, to which it is much more natural to go by sea, than by long circuits frequently impracticable, or at least so very

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difficult, as to induce men to undertake almost any thing in order to avoid them.

It is certain, that the art of navigation has shared the same fate with many others, of which we have no proof that our early ancestors were entirely ignorant, some of which are now lost, and others again preserved only among a few nations; but what does this prove? We must always return to this principle, that the arts necessary to the designs of God have never been unknown to those whose business it was to put them in execution. Industry, has, perhaps, invented some which were useful only, and luxury discovered others which served only to gratify the passions. We may also believe, that what has caused many to fall into oblivion, is their having become no longer necessary, and that such has been the making long voyages as soon as all the parts of the world were supplied with inhabitants. It was sufficient for the purposes of commerce to range along the coasts, and to pass over to the nearest islands. Need we then be surprized, if men, for want of practice, lost the secret of making long voyages on an element so inconstant, and so frequently tempestuous.

Who can ever affirm that it was lost so soon? Strabo says in several places, that the inhabitants of Cadiz, and all the Spaniards, had large vessels, and excelled in the art of navigation. Pliny complains, that in his time, navigation was not so perfect as it had been for several ages before; the Carthaginians and Phenicians were long possessed of the reputation of being hardy and expert mariners. Father Acoſta allows, that Vasco de Gama found, that the use of the compass was known among the inhabitants of Mozambique. The islanders of Madagascar have



a tradition, importing, that the Chinese had sent a colony into their country. And is it not a meer begging of the question, to reject that tradition on account of the impossibility to sail so far without the help of the compass. For if the compass is necessary for sailing from China to Madagascar, I have as much right to say, on the faith of a tradition, universal in that great island, that the Chinese have sailed to Madagascar, therefore they had the use of the compass; as any other person has to reason in this manner, the Chinese were unacquainted with the compass, therefore they never were at Madagascar. However, I do not undertake to support this as matter of fact, which I might safely do with very good authors; I only say I am as well grounded in advancing, as they are in rejecting it.

The Chinese, whose original reaches up as high as the grandsons of Noah, have anciently had fleets; this is a fact sufficiently established in history: What could have hindered them from passing to Mexico by way of the Philippines? The Spaniards perform this voyage every year; from thence by coasting along shore, they might have peopled all America on the side of the South-sea. The *Isles Mariannes*, and many others, of which discoveries are every day made in that extent of ocean, which separates China and Japan from America, might have received their inhabitants in the same manner, some sooner and some later. The inhabitants of the islands of Solomon, those of New-Guinea, new Holland, and Terra Australis, bear too little resemblance to the Americans, to leave room to imagine they could have sprung from the same original, unless we trace it up to the remotest ages. Such is their ignorance that we can never know from whence they really draw their descent; but in fine, all these countries

are peopled ; and it is probable, some have been so by accident. Now if it could have happened in that manner, why might it not have been done at the same time, and by the same means with the other parts of the globe ?

It cannot be denied, that the original of the ancient Celtes and Gauls, so renowned for their expertness in navigation, and who have sent so many colonies to the extremities of Asia and Europe, ascends as high as the children of Japhet ; and might not they have penetrated into America by way of the Azores ? Should it be objected that these islands were uninhabited in the fifteenth century, I answer, that their first discoverers, had, undoubtedly, neglected them, in order to settle themselves in larger and more fertile countries, in an immense Continent, from which they were at no great distance. The Eskimaux, and some other nations of North-America, bear so strong a resemblance to those of the north of Europe and Asia, and so little to the rest of the inhabitants of the New World, that it is easy to perceive they must have descended from the former, and that their modern original has nothing in common with the latter ; I say, modern original, for there is not the least appearance of its being ancient ; and it is reasonable to suppose, that countries so very far from being tempting, have been inhabited much later than others.

The same does not hold good with respect to the rest of America, and I can never think that so considerable a portion of the globe was unknown to, or neglected by the first founders of nations ; and the argument drawn from the characters of the Americans, and the frightful picture which was at first given of them, proves nothing against their antiquity.

quity. It is, three thousand years at most since Europe was full of people as savage and as little civilized, as the greatest part of the Americans ; and of these there are still some remains. Does not Asia, the first seat of religion, policy, arts, and sciences, and the centre of the purest and most ancient traditions, still behold her most flourishing empires environed by the grossest barbarity ? Egypt which has boasted of having been the source of the finest improvements, and which has relapsed into the profoundest ignorance ; the empire of the Abyssinians so ancient, and heretofore so flourishing ; Lybia, which has produced so many great men ; Mauritania which has sent forth so many men learned in all sciences : have not these always had in their neighbourhood people who seemed to possess nothing human but the figure ? Why then should we be surprized that the Americans, so long unknown to the rest of the world, should have become barbarians and savages, and that their most flourishing empires should be found destitute of so many articles which we reckon indispensably necessary in our hemisphere.

Let us enquire what has rendered the mountaineers of the Pyrenees so fierce as many of them are at this day ; what is the original of the Laplanders and Samoeides, the Cafres, and Hottentots ; why under the same parallels of latitude there are blacks in Africa, and not elsewhere ; and we shall then find an answer to the same questions, respecting the Eskimaux and Algonquins, the Hurons and Sioux, the Guayranis and Patagonians. If it be asked, why the Americans have no beards, nor hair on their bodies, and why the greatest part of them are of a reddish colour, I shall ask in my turn, why the Africans are mostly black ? This question is

is of no consequence in the dispute on the original of the Americans.

Primitive nations have been mixed and divided by various causes, foreign and domestick wars as ancient as the lust of dominion, or the passion for domineering, the necessity of separating and removing to greater distances, either because the country was no longer able to contain its inhabitants multiplied to an infinite degree, or because the weaker were obliged to fly before the stronger; that restlessness and curiosity, so natural to mankind, a thousand other reasons easily to be imagined, and which all enter into the designs of Providence; the manner in which those migrations have been made; the difficulty of preserving arts and traditions amongst fugitives transplanted into uncultivated countries, and out of the way of carrying on any correspondence with civilized nations: All this I say is easy to conceive. Unforeseen accidents, tempests, and shipwrecks, have certainly contributed to people all the habitable part of the world; and ought we to wonder after this, at perceiving certain resemblances between the remotest nations, and at finding such a difference between nations bordering upon one another.

We may likewise further understand, that some part of these wanderers, either forced by necessity to unite for mutual defence, or to withdraw from the domination of some powerful people, or induced by the eloquence and abilities of a legislator, must have formed monarchical governments, submitted to laws, and joined together in regular and national societies. Such have been the beginnings of the most ancient empires in the Old World; and such might have been the rise of those of Peru and



Mexico in the New ; but we are destitute of historical monuments to carry us any farther, and there is nothing, I repeat it, but the knowledge of the primitive languages which is capable of throwing any light upon these clouds of impenetrable darkness. It is not a little surprising, that a method so natural and practicable has been hitherto neglected of making discoveries as interesting at least, as the greatest part of those which for these two ages past have employed the attention of the learned. We should, at least, be satisfied amongst that prodigious number of various nations inhabiting America, and differing so much in language from one another ; which are those who speak languages totally and entirely different from those of the Old World, and who, consequently, must be reckoned to have passed over to America in the earliest ages ; and those, who from the analogy of their language, with these used in the three other parts of the globe, leave room to judge that their migration has been more recent, and ought to be attributed to shipwrecks, or to some accident similar to those of which I have spoken in the course of this dissertation.



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HISTORICAL JOURNAL  
OF A  
VOYAGE to AMERICA;

Addressed to the  
DUCHESS OF LESGUIERES.

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LETTER FIRST.

MADAM, *Rochefort, June 30th, 1720.*

YOU were pleased to express a desire I should write you regularly by every opportunity I could find, and I have accordingly given you my promise, because I am not capable of refusing you any thing; but I am greatly afraid you will soon grow weary of receiving my letters: for I can hardly persuade myself you will find them near so interesting as you may imagine they ought to be. In a word, you have laid your account with a continued journal; but in the first place, I foresee that the messengers, by whose hands I must transmit my letters to you, will never be over and above exact in conveying them, and may possibly sometimes fail in delivering them altogether; in which case, you can only have a mutilated and imperfect journal: besides,

besides, I am as yet at a loss where I am to find materials to fill it. For you must certainly know, that I am sent into a country, where I shall often be obliged to travel a hundred leagues and upwards, without so much as meeting with one human creature, or indeed any thing else but one continued prospect of rivers, lakes, woods, and mountains. And besides, what sort of men shall I meet with? With savages, whose language I do not understand, and who are equally unacquainted with mine. Besides, what can men, who live in the most barbarous ignorance, say to me, that can affect me; or what can I find to say to them, who are full as indifferent and unconcerned as to what passes in Europe, and as little affected with it, as you and I Madam are, with what relates to their private concerns.

In the second place, should I make use of the privilege of a traveller, I know you too well to venture upon taking that liberty with you, or to flatter myself I should find any credit with you, should I attempt it. You may therefore lay aside all such apprehensions in myself, for I feel no manner of inclination to forge adventures: I have already had an experimental proof of the truth of what is said by an ancient author, that men carry their own peculiar genius and manners about with them cross all seas, and through all changes of climate, let them go where they will; and I, for my part, hope to preserve that sincerity, for which you know me, cross the vast regions of America, and through those seas, which separate that New World from ours. You are pleased to express some concern for my health, which you do not think sufficiently confirmed to undertake so long and fatiguing a voyage; but thank God, I gather strength daily,  
and



and I wish I could promise myself with the same certainty, or at least probability, every other qualification necessary to acquit myself, as I ought, of the commission, with which I have been entrusted. But would you believe it, Madam, I thought I should have lost my life about half way between Paris and Rochefort. Perhaps you still remember what you have often heard me say, that our rivers in France were no more than rivulets, compared with those of America: I can assure you, the Loire was very near taking a severe revenge on me for this outrage and affront done to the dignity of that river.

I had taken boat at Orleans with four or five officers belonging to Conti's regiment of infantry. On the sixteenth, being over-against *Langets*, and being unable to advance any farther, on account of a strong wind blowing directly in our teeth, we wanted to gain that village, to make sure of good lodgings, in case of being obliged to pass the night there. For this purpose, it was necessary to cross the river, which we accordingly proposed to our boatmen, who showed great reluctance to undertake it; but being young people, and we insisting on it, they durst not contradict us. We had hardly got to the middle of the channel, when we could have wished to have been back again; but it was now too late, and what troubled me most of all, it was I who proposed the advice we so heartily repented of. We were really in great danger, which was evident from the countenances of our conductors; however, they were not discouraged, and managed so well, that they extricated us out of this difficulty.

The danger being over, one of the company who had frequently been on the point of stripping, in order to betake himself to swimming, took upon him to cry out with all his force, but with a tone which showed there was still a palpitation at his heart, that I had been in a great fright. Perhaps he spoke truer than he thought of; all this was, however, nothing but guess-work; and especially to ward off the reproaches they were beginning to make me, and in order to persuade others there was no danger, I had always preserved a tolerable good countenance. We frequently meet with those false bravos, who, to conceal their own apprehensions, endeavour to make a diversion by rallying those who have much better courage than themselves. In the mean time, Madam, were I to believe in omens, here was sufficient to form a bad augury of a voyage I was going to undertake for above three thousand leagues by sea, and to sail in a canoe of bark on two of the greatest rivers in the world, and on lakes almost as large, and at least full as tempestuous as the Pontus Euxinus, or the Caspian sea.

The Loire continued to be full as untractable all the rest of the day, so we slept at *Largets*; our officers, who had their *Lieutenant de Roy* at their head, were civil men enough, and extremely agreeable company. They were, moreover, very religious, and they gave one proof of it, which was far from being doubtful. There was a kind of adventurer that had joined them at Paris, who was half wit, half *petit Maître*: as far as Orleans he had kept tolerably within bounds, but the moment we were embarked, he began to break out a little, and by degrees, came to talk on religious matters in a very libertine manner. I had the satisfaction to see  
that

that all our officers were so much offended at it, that at Langets none of them would lodge in the same house with him. A young lieutenant took it upon him to tell him of it, and obliged him to seek a lodging elsewhere.

I arrived here the 19th ; I was expected as I was charged with packets from the court ; but they looked for somewhat besides, that is to say, some money, which arrived not till to-day. To-morrow I embark on board the *Camel*, a large and fine frigate belonging to the king, now in the road below the Isle of Aix, where I shall find myself in the midst of my acquaintances. I have already been at sea with M. de Voutron, who is captain of her, and with Chaviteau the first pilot ; and I have lived with several of the officers and passengers in Canada. We are told, that we are extremely well-manned, and there is not a sea-officer who is better acquainted with the voyage we are going to make than our captain. Thus I have nothing to desire, whether with regard to the safety or agreeableness of the passage.

*I am, &c.*

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LETTER





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## L E T T E R II.

*Voyage from Rochelle to Quebec ; some Remarks  
on that passage, on the great Bank of New-  
foundland, and on the River St. Lawrence.*

Quebec, Sept. 24, 1720.

Madam,

Y Esterday I arrived in this city, after a tedious and troublesome passage of eleven weeks and six days ; we had, however, only a thousand leagues to sail ; thus you see that at sea we do not always travel as M. l'Abbé de Choisy used to say *per la via delle poste*. I have kept no journal of this voyage, as I suffered greatly from the sea-sickness which lasted with me for more than a month. I had flattered myself with being quit this time, having already paid tribute twice before ; but there are constitutions which are absolutely incapable of enduring that element, of which sort mine is one. Now in the condition, to which we are reduced by this indisposition, it is absolutely impossible to give any attention to what passes in the ship. And besides, nothing can be more barren than such a navigation as this ; for we are generally taken up with enquiring how the wind blows, at what rate we advance, and whether it be in the right course ; and during two thirds of the way you see nothing but

the seas and skies. I am going, however, to give you what my memory can furnish most likely to contribute to your amusement for a quarter of an hour, in order to acquit myself as much as is possible of the promise I made you.

We continued in the road the first of July the whole day, and the second we set sail by the favour of a gentle breeze at north-east. The three first days the wind continued favourable, though in very light breezes, which, from the calmness of the sea, were sufficiently acceptable. It seemed as if it wanted to lull us asleep before it showed itself in all its fury. The fourth or fifth, the wind changed, so that we were obliged to lie close-haul'd \*. The sea grew high, and for near six weeks we were much tossed. The winds shifted continually, but were much oftener against us than favourable, so that we were obliged almost continually to ply to windward.

On the ninth of August our pilots believed themselves on the great bank of Newfoundland, and they were not much mistaken; they were even in the right in reckoning so, it being the business of a good navigator to be always somewhat a-head of his ship; that is to say, to suppose himself farther advanced than he really is; but from the 9th to the 16th, we scarce made any way at all. What is called the great bank of Newfoundland, is properly a mountain, hid under water, about six hundred French leagues from the western side of that kingdom. The Sieur Denys, who has given the world an excellent work on North-America, and a very instructive treatise, gives this mountain an hundred and fifty leagues in extent, from north to south;

\* *To lie close-haul'd*, that is, to sail almost directly against the wind, or as nearly as possible.

but, according to the most exact sea-charts, the beginning of it on the south-side is in 41 deg. north lat. and its northern extremity is in 49 deg. 25 min.

It is indeed true, that both its extremities are so narrow, that it is very difficult to fix its boundaries with any exactness. Its greatest breadth from east to west is about 90 sea leagues of England and France, between 40 and 49 deg. of long. west from the meridian of Paris. I have heard sailors say, that they have anchored upon it in five fathom water; which is likewise contrary to what the *Sieur Denys* advances, who pretends he never found less than five and twenty. But it is certain, that in several places there is upwards of sixty. Towards the middle, on the side next Europe, it forms a bay called *La Fosse*, or the ditch; and this is the reason, why of two ships under the same meridian, and within sight of one another, the one shall find ground, and the other no soundings at all.

Before you arrive at the great bank, you find a lesser one called the *Banc Jacquet*, situated opposite to the middle of the great one. Some mention a third bank before this, to which they give a conical figure; but I have seen pilots who make no more than one of all the three, and answer such objections as are made to them, by asserting, that there are cavities in the great bank, and of such a depth as to deceive those who are led into the false supposition of three different banks, by not happening to run out a sufficient length of cable when they cast anchor. However, let the size and shape of this mountain be as they will, since it is impossible to ascertain them to any degree of exactness; you find on it a prodigious quantity of shell-fish, with several sorts of other fishes of all sizes, most part

of which serve for the common nourishment of the cod, the number of which seems to equal that of the grains of sand which cover this bank. For more than two centuries since, there have been loaded with them from two to three hundred ships annually, notwithstanding the diminution is not perceivable. It might not, however, be amiss, to discontinue this fishery from time to time, and the more so, as the gulph of St. Lawrence, and even the river, for more than sixty leagues, the coasts of Acadia, those of the *Isle Royale*, or Cape Breton, and of Newfoundland, are no less replenished with this fish, than the great bank. These, Madam, are true mines, which are more valuable, and require much less expence than those of Peru and Mexico.

We suffered a great deal during the whole time that the contrary winds detained us on the frontiers of the empire of the cod-fish ; this being by much the most disagreeable and inconvenient place in all the ocean to sail in. The sun scarce ever shows himself here; and for most part of the time the air is impregnated with a cold thick fog, which indicates your approach to the bank, so as to render it impossible to be mistaken. Now what can possibly be the cause of so constant and remarkable a phenomenon ! Can it be the neighbourhood of the land and of those forests with which it is covered ? But besides, that Cape Race, which is the nearest land to the great bank is thirty five leagues distant, the same thing happens not on any other coast of the island ; and further the island of Newfoundland is not subject to fogs, except on the side towards the great bank ; every where else its coasts enjoy a pure air and a serene sky. It is, therefore probable, that the cause of the mists, in which Cape Race is generally



nerally hid, is the proximity of the great bank, and must be sought for on the bank itself. Now this is my conjecture on this head, which I submit to the judgment of the learned. I begin with observing, that we have another sign by which we discover our near approach to the great bank; and it is this, that on all its extremities commonly called its *Ecorres*, there is always a short tumbling sea with violent winds. May we not look upon this as the cause of the mists which prevail here, and say, that the agitation of the water on a bottom, which is a mixture of sand and mud, renders the air thick and heavy, and that the sun can only attract those gross vapours which he is never able sufficiently to rarify? You will ask me, whence this agitation of the sea on the most elevated parts of the great bank proceeds, whilst every where else and even on the bank itself there is a profound calm? If I am not deceived it is this. We daily find in these places currents, which set sometimes one way and sometimes another, the sea being impressed with an irregular motion by those currents, and beating with impetuosity against the sides of the bank, which are almost every where very steep, is repelled from it with the same violence, and is the true cause of the agitation remarked on it.

If the same thing happens not in approaching all steep coasts, it is owing to their not being of equal extent with this; that there are no currents near them, that they are less strong, or that they do not run counter to each other, that they do not meet with so steep a coast, and are not repelled from it with equal violence. It is besides certain, as I have already observed, after those who follow the seafaring life, that the agitation of the sea, and the mud which it stirs up, contribute much to thicken

the air, and encrease the winds : But that those winds when they proceed from no other cause do not extend very far, and that upon the great bank, at any considerable distance from the side of it, you sail with as much tranquillity as in a road, excepting in the case of a violent wind proceeding from some other quarter.

It was on a Friday the 16th of August, we found ourselves on the great bank in 75 fathom water. To arrive at the great bank is called *Bancquer* or *Banking*; to depart from it is called *Debancquer* or *Debanking*, two expressions with which the cod-fishery has enriched our language. It is the custom on finding soundings to cry out, *Vive le Roy*, which is generally done with great cheerfulness. Our crew were longing for fresh cod; but the sun was set, and the wind favourable, so we thought proper to take the advantage of it. Towards eleven o'clock at night arose a strong wind at south-east, which, with our mizen only, would have carried us three leagues an hour. Had we had this inconvenience alone by furling as we did that instant all our other sails, we should have had no reason to complain, but there came on at the same time such a plump of rain, that you would have thought all the cataracts of the heavens had been opened. What was still worse, the thunder began at the time when it commonly ends, it fell so near us, that the rudder was wounded, and all the sailors that worked the ship felt the shock of it. Then it grew louder, and a hundred pieces of cannon could not have made a greater noise. We could not hear one another, and so thick were the peals, as to seem one continued roar. Nor could we see any thing in the midst of the lightning, so much were we dazzled with it. In a word, for an hour  
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and an half, our destruction seemed inevitable; the hearts of the bravest amongst us misgave them; for the thunder continued always directly over our heads, and had it struck us a second time we might have become food for the cod, at whose expence we had reckoned very soon to make good cheer. Castor or Pollux, for I know not which of the two was then upon duty, had forwarned us under the name of *Feu de St. Elme* \*, of all this *Fracas*, otherwise we might possibly have been surprized and overfet.

An hour and a half afterwards the rain ceased, the thunder seemed at a distance, and the flashes of lightning were only seen faintly on the horizon. The wind continued still favourable and without blustering, and the sea became smooth as glass. Every one was then for going to bed, but the beds were all wet, the rain having penetrated through the most imperceptible chinks, a circumstance which is inevitable when a ship is much tossed. They, however did the best they could, and thought themselves extremely happy to be so easily quit. Every thing violent is of short duration, and above all a south-east wind at least in these seas. It never continues but when it grows stronger by degrees, and often ends in a storm. The calm returned with daylight, we made no progress, but diverted ourselves with fishing.

Every thing is good in the cod, whilst it is fresh; and it loses nothing of its good relish, and becomes even firmer after it has been kept two days in salt; but it is the fishers only who taste the most delici-

\* These fires never mis to be observed on the yards at the approach of a storm.



ous parts of this fish, that is to say, the head, the tongue, and the liver, which, after having been steeped in oil and vinegar, with a little pepper, make a most exquisite sauce. Now, in order to preserve all these parts would require too much salt; so that whatever they cannot consume whilst the fishing season lasts, is thrown into the sea. The largest cod I have ever seen was not quite three feet in length; notwithstanding those of the great bank are the largest: but, there is, perhaps, no animal which has so wide a throat in proportion to its size, or that is more voracious. All sorts of things are found in the belly of this fish, even pieces of broken earthen ware, iron, and glass. It was at first believed capable of digesting all this, but the world has become sensible of this mistake, which was founded on this circumstance, that some pieces of iron half worn away, had been found in the belly of it. It is the received opinion at this day that the *Gau*, which is the name that the fishers have given to the stomach of the cod-fish, turns inside out, like a pocket, and that by means of this action, this fish disburdens itself of whatever incommodes it.

What is called in Holland the *Cabelao*, is a sort of cod which is caught in the channel and some other places, and which differs from the cod of America only in that it is of a much smaller size. That of the great Bank is salted only, and this is what is called *White*, or more commonly *Green Cod*. M. Denys tells us on this head, that he has seen salt made in Canada equal to what is carried thither from Brouage in Old France, but that after they had made the experiment, the salt-pits, which had been dug on purpose, were filled up. Those who have the most exclaimed against this country, as being utterly  
good



good for nothing, have been the very persons who have been more than once the cause why no advantage has been reaped from it. Dried cod, or what is called *la Merluche*, can only be taken on the coasts ; which requires great attendance and much experience. M. Denys, who agrees that all those he had ever known to follow this commerce in Acadia ruined themselves by it, fully proves, and makes it extremely plain, that they are in the wrong who conclude from thence that the cod is not in great abundance in those parts. But he asserts, that in order to carry on this fishery there to advantage, the fishers must be persons residing in the country ; and he reasons in this manner. Every season is not equally proper for this fishery ; it can only be carried on from the beginning of the month of May, till the end of August. Now if you bring sailors from France, either you must pay them for the whole year, in which case your expences will swallow up the profits, or you must pay them for the fishing season only, in which they can never find their account. For to say that they may be employed for the rest of the year in sawing of boards and felling of timber, is certainly a mistake, as they could not possibly make the expence of their living out of it ; so that thus either they must needs ruin the undertaker or die of hunger.

But if they are inhabitants of the place, the undertakers will not only be better served, but also it will be their own faults if they do not presently get a fortune. By this means they will be able to make choice of the best hands ; they will take their own time to begin the fishery, they will make choice of proper places, they will make great profits for the space of four months ; and the rest of the year they may employ in working for themselves at home.

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Had things been settled upon this bottom in those parts for a hundred and fifty years last past, Acadia must have become one of the most powerful colonies in all America. For whilst it was given out in France, and that with a kind of affectation that it was impossible ever to do any thing in that country, it enriched the people of New-England by the fishing trade only, though the English were without several advantages for carrying it on, which our situation offered us.

After leaving the great bank, you meet with several lesser ones, all of them equally abounding in fish, nor is the cod the only species found in those seas. And though you do not in fact meet with many *Requiems*, scarce any *Giltbeads* and Bonettas, or those other fishes which require warmer seas, yet to make amends they abound with whales, blowers, sword-fish, porpusses, threshers, with many others of less value. We had here more than once the pleasure of viewing the combat of the whale and sword-fish, than which nothing can be more entertaining. The sword-fish is of the thickness of a cow, from seven to eight feet long, the body tapering towards the tail. It derives its name from its weapon, which is a kind of sword three feet in length and four fingers in breadth. It proceeds from his snout, and from each side he has a range of teeth an inch long, and placed at equal distances from each other. This fish is dressed with any sort of sauce, and is excellent eating. His head is more delicious than a calf's, and thicker, and of a squarer form. His eyes are extremely large. The whale and sword-fish never meet without a battle, and the latter has the fame of being the constant aggressor. Sometimes two sword-fishes join against one whale, in which case the parties are by no means

means equal. The whale, in lieu of arms offensive and defensive, has only his tail; in order to use it against his enemy he dives with his head, and if the blow takes place finishes him at a stroke; but the other, who is very adroit in shunning it, immediately falls upon the whale, and buries his weapon in his sides. And as he seldom pierces quite to the bottom of the fat, does him no great damage; when the whale discovers the other darting upon him he dives, but the sword-fish pursues him under water, and obliges him to rise again to the surface; then the battle begins anew, and lasts till the sword-fish loses sight of the whale, who makes a flying fight of it, and is a better swimmer than he on the surface of the water.

The *Flettau*, or thresher, resembles a large plaice, and what is called by the French fishermen *flet*, appears to be the diminutive of this fish. He is grey on the back and white under the belly. His length is generally from four to five feet, his breadth at least two, and his thickness one. His head is very thick, all of it exquisite and extremely tender; from the bones is extracted a juice which is preferable to the finest marrow. His eyes which are almost as large as those of the swordfish, and the gills are most delicious morsels. The body is thrown into the sea, to fatten the cod, to whom the thresher is the most dangerous enemy, and who makes but one meal of three of those fishes. I shall not trouble your Grace with a description of all the species of birds which live on those seas, and that only by fishing, all of them being naturally fishers, as several travellers have already mentioned them, though their accounts contain nothing worth notice.

On the 18th, the wind favourable; we believe the winds have carried us a little too far to the southward, and we are sailing west-north-west, in order to recover our latitude. For ten or twelve days past we have never seen the sun, and on that account have not been able to take an observation. This happens pretty often, and is what occasions the greatest danger of this navigation. Towards eight o'clock in the morning, we perceive a small vessel, which seems to make towards us, we stand towards her, and when we are come near enough, asked her, in what latitude we are? This was an Englishman, the captain of which answered in his own language; we imagined, he said, we were in 45 deg. We had, however, no reason to rely too much upon his account, as he might possibly be in the same mistake with ourselves. We take heart notwithstanding, and as the wind continues favourable, we flatter ourselves if it stands, with the hopes of passing the gulph in two days.

Towards four o'clock in the evening the wind fell, which amazed us all; this was, notwithstanding, what preserved us. At 11 o'clock at night, the horizon appeared very black a-head of us, tho' every where else the heavens were extremely serene. The sailors of the watch did not hesitate to say, that it was the land we saw, the officer of the watch laughed at them, but on seeing that they persisted in their opinion, he began to think they might possibly be in the right. Luckily for us, there was so little wind, that it was with difficulty the ship would steer; so that he hoped day-light would appear before we approached too near the land. At midnight the watch was changed; the sailors, who succeeded those on the former watch, were immediately of their opinion; but their officer undertook to prove  
to



to them that what they saw could not possibly be the land, but was a fog which would vanish as daylight came on. He was not able to persuade them of it, and they persisted in maintaining that the heavens were too serene for any mist to be on the opposite side, except the land lay that way likewise.

At day-break, they all fell a crying out that they saw the land. The officer, without even deigning to look that way, shrugged up his shoulders, and at four o'clock went to sleep, assuring them, that when he should awake he should find this pretended land vanished. His successor who was the Count de Vaudreuil, being more cautious, immediately ordered some of the sails to be furled, and was not long before he saw the necessity of this precaution. As soon as day appeared, we discovered the horizon all set round with land, and at the same time a small English vessel at anchor within two cannon shot of us. M. de Voutron being informed of it caused the incredulous officer to be called up that instant, whom they had much to do to get out of his cabin, where he maintained that it was impossible we could have land so near us. He came, however, after two or three summonses, and at sight of the danger to which his obstinacy had exposed us, he was seized with astonishment. He is, notwithstanding the most expert man in France for navigating on these seas, but too great a share of abilities is sometimes of prejudice when we place too much confidence in them.

Notwithstanding, Madam, if the wind had not fallen at four o'clock in the evening before, we had certainly gone to the bottom in the night; for we were running full sail upon breakers, from whence  
it

it was impossible we could ever be got off. The difficulty was to know where we were. We were, however, certain that we were not in 45 deg. the evening before. The question was, were we more to the north or south? And on this there were different opinions. One of our officers assured us, that the land which appeared before us was Acadia; that he had formerly made a voyage thither, and that he knew it again; another maintained that it was the islands of St. Peter. But what reason is there to think, said others to him, we are so far advanced? It is not yet twenty-four hours since we were upon the great bank, and it is more than an hundred leagues from the great bank, to the islands of St. Peter. The pilot Chaviteau pretended, that it was Cape Race. That there is some error in our reckoning, said he, there is not the least doubt, and we ought not to wonder at it, it being impossible to keep an exact account in the way of currents which we are not acquainted with, and which are continually changing, and especially as we had not the benefit of taking the latitude to set us to rights. But it is past the bounds of all probability that we should either be on the coast of Acadia, or at the islands of St. Peter\*.

His reasoning appeared just to us, we could, however, have wished he had been mistaken, for we knew how disagreeable a thing it was to be en-

\* In 1725, the same Chaviteau committed a blunder much more fatal. He was then likewise king's pilot on board the *Camel*, and having been several days without taking the latitude in the night of the 25th of August, this ship struck upon a rock near Louisburgh in the island of Cape-Breton, and every soul on board perished. It appeared by the journals that had been kept on board, and which were found afterwards, that they believed themselves still seventy leagues from that island.

tangled with the land under Cape Race. In this uncertainty we resolved to consult the captain of the Englishman that lay a-head of us, and Chaviteau was charged with this commission. He reflected at his return, that the English had been as much surprized at finding themselves in this bay as we were, but with this difference, that this was the place whither their business led them ; that Cape Race was before us, and Cape du Brole ten leagues below ; that from the midst of those breakers, on which we had like to have been cast away, there issued a river, at the entry of which there was an English settlement, whither this small vessel was bound with provisions.

About fifteen years ago, there happened to us a very singular adventure in this very passage, and which exposed us to, perhaps, as great danger as that which I have been relating. This was a few days after the 15th of August, and till then we had been much incommoded with excessive heats. One morning, as we were getting up we were seized with so intense a cold as to be obliged to have recourse to our winter garments. We could, by no means imagine the cause of this, as the weather was extremely fine, and as the wind did not blow from the north. At last, on the third day thereafter, at four o'clock in the morning, one of the sailors cried out with all his might, Luff, luff, that is, place the helm so as to bring the ship nearer to the wind. He was obeyed, and the moment thereafter, we perceived an enormous piece of ice which glanced along the side of the vessel, and against which she must infallibly have been stove to pieces, if the sailor had not been endued with mariner's eyes, for we could scarce see it, and if the man at the helm had been less alert in shifting the tiller.

I did not, however, see this piece of ice, as I was not then got up; but all who were then upon deck, assured us, that it seemed as high as the towers of *Notre Dame* at Paris, and that it was a great deal higher than the masts of the ship. I have often heard it maintained that this was impossible, because, besides its extraordinary height above the sea, it must also reach to a considerable depth under water, and that it was not possible in the nature of things, that such a piece of ice could be formed. To this I answer, in the first place, that in order to deny the fact, we must give the lie to a number of persons, for it is not the first time that such floating islands have been seen at sea. The Mother of the Incarnation being upon the same passage, run the same hazard in broad day-light. The piece of ice which for want of wind to carry her out of its way, had like to have sent her to the bottom, was seen by the whole crew, and was reckoned much larger than that which we met with. She adds, that the general absolution was given as is usual in cases of extreme danger.

It is moreover certain, that in Hudson's bay there are pieces of ice formed by the fall of torrents, which tumble from the top of mountains, and which breaking off in the summer with a hideous noise, are afterwards carried different ways by the current. The *Sieur Jeremie*, who passed several years in this bay, tells us, that he had the curiosity to cause sound close to one of these pieces of ice which had been stranded, and that after running out a hundred fathom of line, they found no bottom. I return to our adventure. Cape Race, Madam, is the south-east point of the island of Newfoundland; it is situated in 46 deg. and about 30 min. north latitude. The coast runs from hence westward,



ward, a little inclining to the north for the space of a hundred leagues, and terminates at Cape Ray in 47 deg. Almost half-way, is the great bay of Placentia, one of the finest ports in all America. West-south-west from this is a Hummock, which is seen from far, and serves to make it known. This is called the *Red Hat*, from its appearing in this form at a distance, and from its being of a reddish colour. On the 23d at noon, we were abreast of it, and in the evening we sailed along the islands of St. Peter, which lay on the starboard side, that is to say on our right-hand.

These are three islands, the two first of which are exceeding high, and from the side on which we were, could be seen nothing but mountains covered with moss. It is pretended that this moss in some places covers very fine porphyry. On the side towards Newfoundland, there is some arable land, with an indifferent good port, where we formerly had some settlements. The largest and most western of the three, which is more commonly called Maguelon island, is not so high as the two others, and the land of it appears to be very level. It is about three quarters of a league in length. On the 24th, at day-break, we had left it only five or six leagues behind us, but after midnight we had had no wind. Towards five o'clock in the morning, there arose a light breeze at south-east. Whilst we were waiting till it should grow strong enough to fill our sails, we diverted ourselves with fishing, and caught a considerable quantity of cod. We spent two hours more than we ought to have done in this diversion, and we had very soon sufficient reason to repent it.

It was eight o'clock when we made sail, and we run the whole night in hopes of discovering Cape Ray which lay upon our right, or the little island of St. Paul, which we ought to leave on our left, and which is almost opposite to Cape Ray, but night came on without our having had sight of either. We would then have been very glad that we had made use of the time we had lost. What was most disagreeable in this, was, that towards midnight we were overtaken by a storm, much such another as that which we had met with on the great bank, and as we had no room to doubt of our being near one or other of the two lands between which our course lay, we durst not take the benefit of the wind which would have advanced us a good deal in our course. Thus, in spite of Chaviteau's advice, who undertook to carry us thorough in safety, we lay too. At day-break we perceived Cape Ray, on which the currents were driving us, and to compleat our misfortune, we had not wind enough to get clear of the coast. We were almost ashore, when about half an hour past five in the morning, a light breath of wind at north-west came in the nick of time to our assistance; we lost nothing by it, and we were extricated from the danger in which we were. The north-west, after doing us this good office, would have obliged us extremely had it made way for some other wind; it did not, however, comply with our wishes, and for two whole days detained us in the mouth of the gulph of St. Laurence. On the third day we passed between the island of St. Paul and Cape St. Laurence, which is the most northerly point of the *Isle Royale*, or island of Cape Breton. This passage is very narrow, and is never ventured upon in foggy weather, because the island of St. Paul is so small as to be easily hid by the mist. That which lies between this island and Cape Ray

is much broader ; but our sails were set to take the other when the wind shifted ; accordingly we took advantage of it. The gulph of St. Laurence is fourscore leagues in length, which a good wind at south-east, with the assistance of the currents, carried us through in twenty-four hours. About half-way you meet the *Isles aux Oiseaux*, or Bird Islands, which we sailed along at the distance of a small cannon shot, and which must not be confounded with those which were discovered by *James Cartier*, near the Island of Newfoundland. These of which we are now speaking, are two rocks which appeared to me to rise up tapering to a sharp point about sixty feet above the surface of the water, the largest of which was between two and three hundred feet in circumference. They are very near one another, and I do not believe there is water enough between them for a large shallop. It is hard to say what colour they are of, the mute, or dung of sea-fowl, covering entirely both the surface and banks. There are to be seen, however, in some places veins of a reddish colour.

They have been visited several times ; and whole shallops have been loaded with eggs of all sorts, and the stench is affirmed to be utterly insupportable. And some add, that besides the sea-gulls and the cormorants, which come thither from all the neighbouring lands, there are found a number of other fowl that cannot fly. What is wonderful, is, that in so prodigious a multitude of nests every one finds his own. We fired one cannon-shot, which spread the alarm over all this feathered commonwealth, when there arose over the two islands a thick cloud of those fowl of at least two or three leagues in circuit. On the morrow, about day-break the wind fell all at once : Two hours after that we doubled Cape Rose, and entered the river St.

Laurence, which runs north-east and south-west; and the north-west wind, which immediately rose, would have served us well enough, but as we had lost two hours on the twenty-fourth in fishing, and in consequence thereof, two whole days at the entry of the gulph, we were obliged to wait here till the north-west should fall, that is to say, five days, in which we did not make five leagues. This delay was not even the greatest mischief which it occasioned us; it was besides very cold, and there was a great swell which tossed us exceedingly, and when the gale was about to fall it was very near being the cause of our destruction in the manner you are presently going to see. But I must first give you a map of the country where we were. Cape Rose is properly the mouth of the river St. Laurence, and it is here we must measure its breadth at its opening, which is about thirty leagues. Somewhat below this, and more to the southward, are the bay and point of Gaspey or Gachepé. Those who pretend that the river St. Laurence is forty leagues over at its mouth, probably measure it from the eastern point of Gaspey. Below the bay you perceive a sort of island, which is in fact, no more than a steep rock, of about thirty fathoms in length, ten high, and four broad. One would take it for a fragment of an old wall, and it has been asserted that it formerly joined *Mont Joli*, which stands over-against it on the Continent. This rock has in the middle an opening in the form of an arch, through which a Biscayan shalop might pass under sail, and hence it has got the name of *Isle Percée*, or the bored Island. Navigators know that they are near it when they discover a flat mountain, rising above several others, called *Roland's Table*. The island Bonaventure is a league from Bored Island, and almost at the same distance lies the island *Miscon*, eight leagues



leagues in circuit, which has an excellent harbour. In the offing, at a small distance from this island, is a spring of fresh water, which boils up and jets to a considerable height.

All these parts are excellent for the fishery, and there is every where exceeding good anchoring ground. It would even be easy to erect magazines or warehouses, which would serve by way of store-houses, or repositories for Quebec. But an infinite deal of time which ought to have been employed in making sure of the cod, and several other fisheries, with which this sea abounds, and in fortifying ourselves in those posts, the importance of which we have been too long in discovering, has been lost in carrying on the fur trade. It was natural for us, having near us so sure and commodious sheltering to have gone thither to wait the return of a favourable wind, but we expected it to return every moment, and we thought to make the most of it the moment it sprung up.

At last, on Tuesday the 10th of September, towards noon, the northwest fell; then finding ourselves without being able to advance, nor even almost to work the ship, we amused ourselves in fishing, and this too cost us very dear. For the man at the helm being more attentive to the fishing than to his rudder, let the ship go up into the wind, which occasioned the sails to lie aback. During the calm, we had already driven considerably on the island of Anticosti, and the accident I have been speaking of caused us come so near it. As the current carried us that way, that we already could distinctly discern the breakers, with which the island is lined on this side; to compleat our misfortune,

the small breath of wind which had just risen failed us in our greatest need.

Had the calm continued for ever so short a while, there had been an end of us. A moment after our sails filled a little, and we had a mind to bring the ship about; but she, contrary to custom, refused to stay, and that twice running; a certain proof that the current which acted upon her was very strong. We now thought ourselves past all hope, because we were too near the rocks to risk wearing her; but after all we had no other method left. We therefore set hand to the work, more that we might have nothing to reproach ourselves with, than from any hope of saving our lives; and in that very instant we experienced the truth of this maxim, that God helps those who help themselves. The wind shifted to the north, and freshened by little and little, so that towards seven o'clock in the evening we had quite cleared the point of Anticosti, which had filled us with so much apprehension.

This island extends for about forty leagues from north-east to south-west, almost in the middle of the river St. Laurence, being at the same time extremely narrow. It had been granted to the Sieur Joliet, on his return from the discovery of the Mississippi, a present of no great value; this island is absolutely good for nothing. It is ill wooded, its soil barren, and without a single harbour where any vessel can lie in safety. There was a rumour some years since, that a silver mine had been discovered on it, and for want of miners a goldsmith was sent from Quebec, where I then was, to make an essay of it; but he made no great progress. He soon perceived by the discourse of him who had given information of it, that the mine existed only in the  
brain

brain of this person, who was incessantly recommending to him to put his trust in the Lord. He was of opinion, that if trust in God was sufficient to make him discover a mine there was no necessity of going to Anticosti to find it, so that he returned as he came. The coasts of this island are abundantly well stocked with fish; I am notwithstanding of opinion, that the heirs of the Sieur Joliet, would willingly exchange their immense lordship for the smallest fief in France.

After having passed this island you have the pleasure of always being between two shores, and to make sure of the progress you have made; but there is a necessity of using much precaution in sailing on this great river. On Thursday the third, we left on the larboard side the *Mounts Notre Dame* and *Mount Louys*; this is a chain of very high mountains; between which there are several vallies, which were formerly inhabited by Indians. In the neighbourhood of Mount Lewis, there are even very good lands, and on them several French plantations. A very advantageous settlement might be made here for the fishery, especially the whale-fishery, and it would also be of use to the ships which come from France; they might there find refreshments of which they are sometimes in extreme want. In the night following, the wind encreased, and had very near done us an ill turn. We were no great way from Trinity-point, which we were to leave on our left, but our pilots did not believe themselves so near it; and they even imagined they had given it a sufficient birth so as to have nothing to fear from it. Monsieur de Voutron starting up from his sleep called out to bear away. Had this order been postponed but for one quarter of an hour, the ship must have been dashed to pieces upon

on the point, which appeared some moments afterwards. On the fourth in the evening we came to anchor, for the first time, a little above what is called the *Paps of Matane*. These are two summits of the same mountain, situated at the distance of two leagues from the river. I do not believe that a wilder country can any where be seen. Nothing appears on all hands but impenetrable thickets, rocks, and sands, without one inch of good land. There are, it is true, fine springs, excellent game, and that in great plenty, but hunting is here almost utterly impracticable to any except Indians and Canadians.

We remained here four days, as on the other side of the river we had to avoid the shoal of *Manicouagau*, famous for shipwrecks, and which advances two leagues into the river. It takes its name from a river proceeding from the mountains of Labrador, which forms a pretty large lake of the same name, but more commonly known by that of St. Barnabas, and which empties itself across this shoal. Some of our maps call it *la riviere Neire*, or Black River.

On the eighth we made sail; though, for any way we made it was hardly worth while; but variety serves to divert one, and exercise is of use to the sailors. In the night, between the 10th and 11th, we made fifteen leagues; had we got half a league further we should have got over the most critical part of the whole river. We should, besides, have got up as high as the strong tides, for hitherto they are scarce perceptible, except near the shore; but the wind shifted of a sudden to the south-west, so that we were obliged to look out for a place of shelter which we found under *L'Isle Verte*, or Green-  
Island,



Island, where we remained five days. Here we wanted for nothing, but at the expiration of this time we had a mind to try whether we should be able to find, as we had been made to hope, land-winds on the north shore, which might carry us into the high tides.

We therefore came to an anchor at *Moulin Baude*; this traverse is five leagues. On my arrival I asked to see this mill, and was shewn some rocks from which issues a small rill of chrystal water, sufficient at least to make a mill go; there is, however, no likelihood of a mill ever being built here. There is not, perhaps, in the whole world a more uninhabitable country than this. The Saguenay lies somewhat higher; this is a river capable of carrying the largest ships twenty-five leagues above its mouth. Entering this river you leave on the right hand the port of Tadoussac, where most part of our geographers have placed a city; but there never was more than one French house in it, with some huts of Indians that came here in trading time; and who afterwards carried their huts away with them as they do with the booths of a fair. This is what constituted the whole of the city.

It is true that this port was for a long time the resort of all the Indian nations of the north and east; that the French repaired thither as soon as the navigation was open, whether from France or from Canada; and lastly, that the missionaries profiting of this opportunity, came thither to negotiate in quality of factors for the kingdom of heaven. The fair being ended, the merchants returned to their own homes, the Indians took the road of their forests or villages, and the labourers in the harvest of the gospel followed these latter to cultivate

vate the divine seed sown in their minds. Notwithstanding both the relations which have been published, and those who have travelled thither have said a great deal on the subject of Tadoussac, and our geographers have supposed it to be a city; and some authors have even advanced that it had a jurisdiction belonging to it.

In other respects Tadoussac is an excellent harbour, and I have been assured, that five and twenty ships of war might be sheltered in it from all winds, that the anchorage is sure in it, and that its entry is extremely easy. Its form is almost round, and it is surrounded on all sides by steep rocks of a prodigious height, from whence issues a small rivulet capable of supplying all the ships with water. This whole country is full of marble, but its greatest riches would be that of the whale-fishery. In 1705, being at anchor with the ship *Hero* in the same place, I saw at the same time four of these fishes, which from head to tail were almost as long as our ship. The Basques formerly carried on this fishery with success; and there are, on a small island which bears their name, and which lies a little below Green-Island, the remains of furnaces and the ribs of whales. What a mighty difference must there be between a sedentary and domestic fishery, which might be carried on at one's ease in a river, and that which is followed on the coasts of Greenland with so much risk and at so vast an expence.

The two following days no land-wind, and we regret extremely our former anchoring-place, at which there were French plantations, whereas here there are neither men nor beasts to be seen. At length, on the third day at noon, we anchor, and  
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we clear the passage of *Isle Rouge*, or Red-Island, which is no easy matter. You must first steer right upon this island, as if you had a mind to land on it; this is done to shun the point *aux Allouettes*, which lies at the entrance into the Saguenay on the left, and advances a good way into the river; this done, you stand the direct contrary way. The passage to the southward of Red-Island is much safer; but in order to make this we must have returned directly back, and the wind might have come to have failed us. The *Red Island* is no more than a rock almost level with the surface of the water which appears of a true red colour, and on which many a ship has been cast away.

Next day with little wind and the help of the tide we come to an anchor above the *Isle aux Coudres*, which lies at fifteen leagues distance both from Quebec and Tadoussac. You leave this on the left, and this passage is dangerous when you have not the wind to your liking; it is rapid, narrow, and a good quarter of a league in length. In Champlain's time it was much easier; but in 1663, an earthquake plucked up a mountain by the roots, and whirled it upon the *Isle aux Coudres*, which it increased in dimensions more than one half, and in the place where this mountain stood appeared a whirlpool, which it is dangerous to approach. One might pass to the southward of the *Isle aux Coudres*, and this passage would be both easy and without danger. It bears the name of Mons. D' Iberville who attempted it with success; but the general way is to pass on the north side of it, and custom you know is a sovereign law for the common run of mankind.

Above

Above this whirlpool, which I have just now been mentioning, is the bay of St. Paul, where begins the plantations on the north shore, and where there are woods of pine-trees which are much valued ; here are found red pines of an extreme beauty, and which are never known to break. The superiors of the seminary of Quebec are lords of this bay. A fine lead mine has been lately discovered in this place. Six leagues farther up the river is an exceeding high promontory, at which terminates a chain of mountains, stretching more than four hundred leagues to the westward ; this is called Cape *Tourmente*, probably because he who thus christened it had met with some hard gales of wind under it. There is good anchoring here, where you are surrounded with islands of all sizes which afford excellent shelter. The most considerable of these is the Isle of Orleans, whose fertile fields appear in form of an amphitheatre, and agreeably terminate the prospect. This island is about fourteen leagues in circuit, and was erected into an earldom in 1676, under the name of St. Lawrence, in favour of Francis Berthelot, secretary-general of the artillery, who had purchased it of Francis de Laval, first bishop of Quebec. It had then four villages in it, and now has pretty populous parishes.

Of the two channels which this island forms, that to the south only is navigable for ships. Even shallops cannot pass through that to the north, except at high-water. Thus from Cape *Tourmente*, you must traverse the river to get to Quebec, and even this is not without its difficulties ; it is incommoded with shifting sands, on which there is not at all times water sufficient for the largest ships, which obliges those who pass this way not to attempt it, except in the time of flood. This difficulty might  
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be shunned by taking the channel of M. d' Iberville. Cape Tourmente from whence this traverse is best made, is a hundred and ten leagues from the sea, the water near it still continuing brackish. It does not become drinkable till the entrance into the two channels, which are formed by the Isle of Orleans. This is a phenomenon pretty difficult to explain, and especially, if we consider the great rapidity of the river notwithstanding its breadth.

The tides flow regularly in this place five hours, and ebb seven. At Tadoussac they flow and ebb six hours, and the higher you ascend the river the more the flux diminishes, and the reflux encreases. At the distance of twenty leagues above Quebec, the flux is three hours, and the reflux nine. Beyond this there is no sensible tide; when it is half flood in the port of Tadoussac and at the mouth of the Saguenay, it only begins to flow at *Checoutimi* twenty five leagues up this last river, notwithstanding it is high water at all these three places at the same time. This is no doubt owing to this circumstance, that the rapidity of the Saguenay, which is still greater than that of the St. Lawrence, driving back the tide, occasions for some time a kind of equilibrium of the tides at *Checoutimi*, and at the entrance of this river into the St. Lawrence. This rapidity has besides come to the pitch, in which we now see it, only since the earthquake in 1663. This earthquake overturned a mountain, and threw it into the river, which confined its channel, forming a peninsula called *Checoutimi*, beyond which is a rapid stream impassable even to canoes. The depth of the Saguenay from its mouth as high as *Checoutimi*, is equal to its rapidity. Thus it would be impossible to come to an anchor in it, were it not for the convenience

venience of making fast to the trees, with which its banks are covered.

It has been moreover observed, that in the gulph of St. Lawrence, at the distance of eight or ten leagues from the shore, the tides vary according to the different positions of the land, or the difference of seasons; that in some places they follow the courses of the winds, and that in others they go quite contrary to the wind; that at the mouth of the river in certain months of the year the currents bear constantly out to sea, and in other places set right in shore; lastly, that in the great river itself, as high up as the Seven Islands, that is to say, for the space of sixty leagues it never flows on the south side, nor ebbs on the north. It is not easy to give solid reasons for all this, but what is most likely, is, that there are certain motions under water which produce those irregularities, or that there are currents which set from the surface to the bottom, and from the bottom to the surface in the manner of a pump.

Another observation we may make in this place, is, that the variation of the compass, which in some ports of France is only two or three degrees north-west, constantly diminishes as you approach the meridian of the Azores, or western Islands, where it is no longer sensible; but that beyond this it encreases after such a rate that on the great Bank of Newfoundland, it is twenty-two degrees and upwards; that afterwards it begins to diminish but slowly, since it is still sixteen degrees at Quebec, and twelve in the country of the Hurons, where the sun sets thirty three minutes later than at that capital.

On Sunday the 22d, we came to an anchor in the traverse of the Isle of Orleans, where we went ashore whilst we waited the return of the tide. I found the country here pleasant, the lands good, and the planters in tolerable good circumstances. They have the character of being something addicted to witchcraft, and they are applied to, in order to know what is to happen, or what passes in distant places. As for instance, when the ships expected from France are later than ordinary, they are consulted for intelligence concerning them, and it has been asserted that their answers have been sometimes pretty just; that is to say, that having guessed once or twice right enough, and having for their own diversion made it be believed that they spoke from certain knowledge, it has been imagined that they consulted with the devil.

When James Cartier discovered this island he found it entirely covered with vines, from whence he called it the Isle of Bacchus. This navigator was of Brittany; after him came certain Normans, who grubbed up the vines, and in the place of Bacchus substituted Pomona and Ceres. In effect, it produces good wheat and excellent fruits. They begin also to cultivate tobacco on it, which is far from being bad. At length on Monday the 23d, the Camel anchored before Quebec, whither I had gone two hours before in a canoe of bark. I have a voyage of a thousand leagues to make in these frail vehicles, I must therefore accustom myself to them by degrees. And now, Madam, these are the circumstances of my voyage, which I have been able to recollect; they are, as you see, trifles, which at most might be good enough to amuse persons, who have nothing to do on board ship. I shall, perhaps, afterwards have something more interest-

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ing to communicate to you, but shall add nothing to this letter, as I would not miss the opportunity of a merchant ship just ready to set sail. I shall also have the honour to write to you by the king's ship.

*I am, &c.*

LETTER



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## L E T T E R III.

*Description of Quebec ; character of its inhabitants, and the manner of living in the French colony.*

Quebec, Oct. 28, 1720.

Madam,

I AM now going to write you some particulars concerning Quebec ; all the descriptions I have hitherto seen of it are so faulty, that I imagined I should do you a pleasure in drawing you a true portrait of this capital of New France. It is truly worthy of being known, were it only for the singularity of its situation ; there being no other city besides this in the known world that can boast of a fresh water harbour a hundred and twenty leagues from the sea, and that capable of containing a hundred ships of the line. It certainly stands on the most navigable river in the universe.

This great river as high as the island of Orleans, that is to say, at the distance of a hundred and ten or twelve leagues from the sea, is never less than four or five leagues in breadth ; but above this island it suddenly narrows, and that at such a rate as to be no more than a mile broad at Quebec ; from which circumstance this place has been called

Quebeio or Quebec, which in the Algonquin language signifies a strait or narrowing. The Abenakis, whose language is a dialect of the Algonquin, call it Quelibec, that is to say, shut up, because from the entry of the little river *de la Chaudiere*, by which these Indians usually came to Quebec, from the neighbourhood of Acadia; the point of Levi, which projects towards the Isle of Orleans, entirely hides the south channel, as the Isle of Orleans does that of the north, so that the port of Quebec appears from thence like a great bay.

The first object you perceive on your arrival in the road is a fine sheet of water, about thirty feet in breadth, and forty high. This is situated close by the entry of the lesser channel of the Isle of Orleans, and is seen from a long point on the south-side of the river, which as I have already observed seems to join to the Isle of Orleans. This cascade is called the Falls of Montmorency, and the other Point Levi. The reason of which is, that the admiral de Montmorency, and the Duc de Ventadour his nephew, were successively viceroys of New France. There is no person, who would not imagine, that so plentiful a fall of water, and which never dries up must proceed from some fine river; it is, however, no more than a puny stream, in which in some places there is hardly water up to the ankle; it flows, however constantly, and derives its source from a pleasant lake twelve leagues distant from the falls.

The city stands a league higher, on the same side and at the place where the river is narrowest. But between it and the Isle of Orleans, is a basin a large league, over every way into which discharges itself the little river St. Charles, flowing from the north-

north-west. Quebec stands between the mouth of this river and Cape Diamond, which projects a little into the river. The anchoring place is opposite to it, in five and twenty fathoms water good ground. Notwithstanding when it blows hard at north-east, ships drag their anchors sometimes but with scarce any danger.

When Samuel Champlain founded this city in 1608, the tide usually rose to the foot of the rock. Since that time the river has retired by little and little, and has at last left dry a large piece of ground, on which the lower town has since been built, and which is now sufficiently elevated above the water's edge, to secure its inhabitants against the inundations of the river. The first thing you meet with on landing is a pretty large square, and of an irregular form, having in front a row of well built houses, the back part of which leans against the rock, so that they have no great depth. These form a street of a considerable length, occupying the whole breadth of the square, and extending on the right and left as far as the two ways which lead to the upper town. The square is bounded towards the left by a small church, and towards the right by two rows of houses placed in a parallel direction. There is also another street on the other side between the church and the harbour, and at the turning of the river under Cape Diamond, there is likewise another pretty long flight of houses on the banks of a creek called *the Bay of Mothers*. This quarter may be reckoned properly enough a sort of suburbs to the lower town.

Between this suburb and the great street, you go up to the higher town by so steep an ascent, that it has been found necessary to cut it into steps. Thus

it is impossible to ascend it except on foot. But in going from the square towards the right a way has been made, the declivity of which is much more gentle, which is lined with houses. At the place where these two ways meet begins that part of the upper town which faces the river, there being another lower town on the side towards the little river St. Charles. The first building worthy of notice you meet with on your right hand in the former of those sides, is the bishop's palace; the left being entirely occupied with private houses. When you are got about twenty paces farther, you find yourself between two tolerably large squares; that towards the left is the place of arms, fronting which, is the fort or citadel, where the governor-general resides; on the opposite side stands the convent of the Recollects, the other sides of the square being lined with handsome houses.

In the square towards your right you come first of all to the cathedral, which serves also for a parish church to the whole city. Near this, and on the angle formed by the river St. Lawrence, and that of St. Charles stands the seminary. Opposite to the cathedral is the college of the jesuits, and on the sides between them are some very handsome houses. From the place of arms run two streets which are crossed by a third, and which form a large isle entirely occupied by the church and convent of the Recollects. From the second square to the river St. Charles, are two descents, one on the south towards the seminary, which is very steep and with very few houses on it; the other near the enclosure of the jesuits, which is very winding, has the *Hotel Dieu*, or Hospital, and half-way down is lined with small houses, and terminates at the palace where the intendant resides. On the other side of the Jesuit's  
col-



college, where their church stands, is a pretty long street, in which is the convent of the Ursuline nuns. The whole of the upper town is built on a bottom partly of marble and partly of slate.

Such, Madam, is the topographical description of Quebec, which as you see is of a considerable large extent, and in which almost all the houses are built of stone, though for all that they do not reckon above seven thousand souls in it \*. But in order to give you a compleat idea of this city, I must give you a particular account of its principal edifices, and shall afterwards speak of its fortifications. The church of the lower town was built in consequence of a vow made during the siege of Quebec, in 1690. It is dedicated to our Lady of Victory, and serves as a chapel of ease for the conveniency of the inhabitants of the lower town. Its structure is extremely simple, a modest neatness forming all its ornament. Some sisters of the congregation, whom I shall have occasion to mention in the sequel, are established to the number of four or five, between this church and the port, where they teach a school.

In the episcopal palace there is nothing finished but the chapel, and one half of the building projected by the plan, according to which it is to be an oblong square. If it is ever compleated, it will be a magnificent edifice. The garden extends to the brow of the rock, and commands the prospect of all the road. When the capital of New France, shall have become as flourishing as that of Old France (and we should not despair of any thing,

\* One may easily see by the plan of this city that it has considerably encreased within these twenty years last past.

Paris having been for a long time much inferior to what Quebec is at this day) as far as the sight can reach, nothing will be seen but towns, villas, pleasure houses, and all this is already chalked out; when the great river St. Lawrence, who rowls majestically his waters which he brings from the extremities of the north or west shall be covered with ships; when the isle of Orleans and both shores of each of the rivers which form this port, shall discover fine meadows, fruitful hills, and fertile fields, and in order to accomplish this, there wants only more inhabitants; when part of the river St. Charles, which agreeably meanders through a charming valley, shall be joined to the city, the most beautiful quarter of which it will undoubtedly form; when the whole road shall have been faced with magnificent quays, and the port surrounded with superb edifices; and when we shall see three or four hundred ships lying in it loaden with riches, of which we have hitherto been unable to avail ourselves, and bringing in exchange those of both worlds, you will then acknowledge, Madam, that this terras must afford a prospect which nothing can equal, and that even now it ought to be something singularly striking.

The cathedral would make but an indifferent parish church in one of the smallest towns in France; judge then whether it deserves to be the seat of the sole bishoprick in all the French empire in America, which is much more extensive than that of the Romans ever was. No architecture, the choir, the great altar, and chapels, have all the air of a country church. What is most passable in it, is a very high tower, solidly built, and which, at a distance, has no bad effect. The seminary which adjoins to this church is a large square, the buildings  
of

of which are not yet finished, what is already completed is well executed, and has all the conveniences necessary in this country. This house is now rebuilding for the third time, it was burnt down to the ground in 1703, and in the month of October, in the year 1705, when it was near compleatly rebuilt, it was again almost entirely consumed by the flames. From the garden you discover the whole of the road and the river St. Charles, as far as the eye can reach.

The fort or citadel is a fine building, with two pavilions by way of wings; you enter it through a spacious and regular court, but it has no garden belonging to it, the fort being built on the brink of the rock. This defect is supplied in some measure with a beautiful gallery, with a balcony, which reaches the whole length of the building; it commands the road, to the middle of which one may be easily heard by means of a speaking trumpet; and hence too you see the whole lower town under your feet. On leaving the fort, and turning to the left, you enter a pretty large esplanade, and by a gentle declivity you reach the summit of Cape Diamond, which makes a very fine platform. Besides the beauty of the prospect, you breathe in this place the purest air; you see from it a number of porpoises as white as snow playing on the surface of the water, and you sometimes find a sort of diamonds on it finer than those of Alençon. I have seen some of them full as well cut as if they had come from the hand of the most expert workman. They were formerly found here in great plenty, and hence this cape has the name it bears. At present they are very scarce. The descent towards the country is still more gentle than that towards the esplanade.



The Fathers Recollects have a large and beautiful church, which might do them honour even at Versailles. It is very neatly wainscotted; and is adorned with a large *Tribune* or gallery somewhat heavy, but the wainscoting of which is extremely well carved, which goes quite round, and in which are included the confession seats. This is the work of one of their brother converts. In a word, nothing is wanting to render it compleat, except the taking away some pictures very coarsely daubed; brother Luke has put up some of his hand which have no need of those foils. Their house is answerable to the church; it is large, solid, and commodious, and adorned with a spacious and well-cultivated garden. The Ursuline nuns have suffered by two fires as well as the seminary; and besides, their funds are so small, and the dowries they receive with the girls in this country are so moderate, that after their house was burnt down for the first time, it was resolved to send them back to France. They have, however, had the good fortune to recover themselves both times, and their church is now actually finished. They are neatly and commodiously lodged, which is the fruit of the good example they set the rest of the colony by their oeconomy, their sobriety and industry; they gild, embroider, and are all usefully employed, and what comes out of their hands is generally of a good taste.

You have no doubt read in some relations, that the college of the jesuits was a very fine building. It is certain, that when this city was no more than an unseemly heap of French barracks, and huts of Indians, this house, which with the fort, were the only edifices built with stone, made some appearance; the first travellers, who judged of it by comparison, represented it as a very fine structure, those  
 4 who



who followed them, and who, according to custom copied from them, expressed themselves in the same manner. Notwithstanding the huts having since disappeared, and the barracks having been changed into houses most of them well-built, the college in some sort disfigures the city, and threatens falling to ruin every day.

Its situation is far from being advantageous, it being deprived of the greatest beauty it could possibly have had, which is that of the prospect. It had at first a distant view of the road, and its founders were simple enough to imagine they would always be allowed to enjoy it; but they were deceived. The cathedral and seminary now hide it, leaving them only the prospect of the square, which is far from being a sufficient compensation for what they lost. The court of this college is little and ill-kept, and resembles more than any thing else a farmer's yard. The garden is large and well-kept, being terminated by a small wood, the remains of the ancient forest which formerly covered this whole mountain\*.

The church has nothing worth notice on the outside except a handsome steeple; it is entirely roofed with slate, and is the only one in all Canada which has this advantage; all the buildings here being generally covered with shingles. It is very much ornamented in the inside; the gallery is bold, light, and well-wrought, and is surrounded with an iron balustrade, painted and gilt, and of excellent workmanship; the pulpit is all gilt, and the work both in iron and wood excellent; there are three altars

\* The college has since been rebuilt from the foundation, and is at present a noble building.

handsomely designed, some good pictures, and is without any dome or cupola, but a flat cieling handsomely ornamented ; it has no stone pavement, in place of which it is floored with strong planks, which makes this church supportable in winter, whilst you are pierced with cold in the others. I make no mention of *four large massy cylindrical columns, each of a single block of a certain sort of porphyry, black as jet, and without either spots or veins*, with which the baron de la Hontan has thought fit to enrich the great altar ; they would certainly do better than those actually there, which are hollow and coarsely daubed in imitation of marble. One might, however, have forgiven this author, if he had never disfigured the truth, except to add lustre to churches.

The *Hotel Dieu*, or hospital has two large wards, one for men and the other for women. The beds here are kept exceeding clean, the sick are well attended, and every thing is commodious and extremely neat. The church stands behind the women's ward, and has nothing worth notice except the great altar. The house is served by the nuns Hospitallers of St. Augustine, of the congregation of the Mercy of Jesus ; the first of whom come originally from Dieppe. They have begun to build themselves a commodious apartment, but will not, in all likelihood, soon finish it for want of funds. As their house is situated on the descent, half-way down the hill, on a flat place, which extends a little towards the river St. Charles, they enjoy a very pleasant prospect.

The intendant's house is called the palace, because the superior council assembles in it. This is a large pavilion the two extremities of which project some feet,

feet, and to which you ascend by a double flight of stairs. The garden front which faces the little river, which stands very near upon a level with it, is much more agreeable than that by which you enter. The king's magazines face the court on the right side, and behind that is the prison. The gate by which you enter is hid by the mountain, on which the upper town stands, and which on this side affords no prospect, except that of a steep rock, extremely disagreeable to the sight. It was still worse before the fire, which reduced some years ago this whole palace to ashes; it having at that time no outer court, and the buildings then facing the street which was very narrow. As you go along this street, or to speak more properly, this road, you come first of all into the country, and at the distance of half a quarter of a league you find the Hospital-General. This is the finest house in all Canada, and would be no disparagement to our largest cities in France; the Fathers Recollects formerly owned the ground on which it stands. M. de St. Vallier, bishop of Quebec, removed them into the city, bought their settlement, and expended a hundred thousand crowns in buildings, furniture, and in foundations. The only fault of this hospital is its being built in a marsh; they hope to be able to remedy it by draining this marsh; but the river St. Charles makes a winding in this place, into which the waters do not easily flow, so that this inconvenience can never be effectually removed.

The prelate, who is the founder, has his apartment in the house, which he makes his ordinary residence; having let his palace, which is also his own building, for the benefit of the poor. He even is not above serving as chaplain to the hospital, as well as to the nuns, the functions of which office, he



he fills with a zeal and application which would be admired in a simple priest who got his bread by it. The artizans, or others, who on account of their great age, are without the means of getting their subsistence, are received into this hospital till all the beds in it are full, and thirty nuns are employed in serving them. These are a Scion or Colony from the hospital of Quebec; but in order to distinguish them, the bishop has given them certain peculiar regulations, and obliges them to wear a silver cross on their breast. Most part of them are young women of condition, and as they are not those of the easiest circumstances in the country the bishop has portioned several of them.

Quebec is not regularly fortified, but they have been long employed in rendering it a place of strength. This city would not be easily taken even in the condition in which it now is. The harbour is flanked by two bastions, which in high tides are almost level with the surface of the water, that is to say, they are elevated five and twenty feet from the ground, for so high do the tides flow in the time of the equinox. A little above the bastion on the right, has been built a half bastion, which is cut out of the rock, and a little higher, on the side towards the gallery of the fort is a battery of twenty-five pieces of cannon. Higher still is a small square fort, called the citadel, and the ways which communicate from one fortification to another are extremely steep. To the left of the harbour quite along the road, as far as the river St. Charles, are good batteries of cannon with several mortars.

From the angle of the citadel, which fronts the city has been built an oreillon of a bastion, from whence has been drawn a curtain at right angles,  
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which communicates with a very elevated cavalier, on which stands a windmill fortified. As you descend from this cavalier, and at the distance of a musket shot from it, you meet first a tower fortified with a bastion, and at the same distance from this a second. The design was to line all this with stone, which was to have had the same angles with the bastions, and to have terminated at the extremity of the rock, opposite to the palace, where there is already a small redoubt, as well as on Cape Diamond. Why this has not been put in execution I have not learned. Such, Madam, was the condition of the place nearly in 1711, when the English fitted out a great armament for the conquest of Canada, which was cast away through the temerity of the admiral, who, contrary to the advice of his pilot, went too near to the Seven Islands, where he lost all his largest ships, and three thousand of his best troops.

Quebec is still at this day in the same situation, which you may assure yourself of by the plan in relievo, which M. de Chauffegros de Leri, chief engineer, sends into France this year, to be placed with the other plans of fortified places in the Louvre. After having informed you of what relates to the exterior of our capital, I must now say a word or two with respect to its principal inhabitants; this is its best side, and if by considering only its houses, squares, streets, churches, and publick buildings, we might reduce it to the rank of our smallest cities in France, yet the quality of those who inhabit it, will sufficiently vindicate us in bestowing upon it the title of a capital.

I have already said, that they reckon no more than seven thousand souls at Quebec; yet you find  
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in it a small number of the best company, where nothing is wanting that can possibly contribute to form an agreeable society. A governor-general, with an etat-major, a noblesse, officers, and troops, an intendant, with a superior council, and subaltern jurisdictions, a commissary of the marine, a grand provost, and surveyor of the highways, with a grand master of the waters and forests, whose jurisdiction is certainly the most extensive in the world; rich merchants, or such as live as if they were so; a bishop and numerous seminary; the recollects and jesuits, three communities of women well educated, assemblies, full as brilliant as any where, at the lady Governess's, and lady Intendants. Enough, in my opinion, to enable all sorts of persons whatever to pass their time very agreeably.

They accordingly do so, every one contributing all in his power to make life agreeable and chearful. They play at cards, or go abroad on parties of pleasure in the summer-time in calasches or canoes, in winter, in sledges upon the snow, or on skaits upon the ice. Hunting is a great exercise amongst them, and there are a number of gentlemen who have no other way of providing handsomely for their subsistence. The current news consist of a very few articles, and those of Europe arrive all at once, though they supply matter of discourse for great part of the year. They reason like politicians on what is past, and form conjectures on what is likely to happen; the sciences and fine arts have also their part, so that the conversation never flags for want of matter. The Canadians, that is to say, the Creoles of Canada draw in with their native breath an air of freedom, which renders them very agreeable in the commerce of life, and no where in the world is our language spoken in greater purity.

ity. There is not even the smallest foreign accent remarked in their pronunciation.

You meet with no rich men in this country, and it is really great pity, every one endeavouring to put as good a face on it as possible, and nobody scarce thinking of laying up wealth. They make good cheer, provided they are also able to be at the expence of fine cloaths; if not, they retrench in the article of the table to be able to appear well dressed. And indeed, we must allow, that dress becomes our Creolians extremely well. They are all here of very advantageous stature, and both sexes have the finest complexion in the world; a gay and sprightly behaviour, with great sweetness and politeness of manners are common to all of them; and the least rusticity, either in language or behaviour, is utterly unknown even in the remotest and most distant parts.

The case is very different as I am informed with respect to our English neighbours, and to judge of the two colonies by the way of life, behaviour, and speech of the inhabitants; nobody would hesitate to say that ours were the most flourishing. In New-England and the other provinces of the continent of America, subject to the British empire, there prevails an opulence which they are utterly at a loss how to use; and in New France, a poverty hid by an air of being in easy circumstances, which seems not at all studied. Trade, and the cultivation of their plantations strengthen the first, whereas the second is supported by the industry of its inhabitants, and the taste of the nation diffuses over it something infinitely pleasing. The English planter amasses wealth, and never makes any superfluous expence; the French inhabitant again enjoys what he

has acquired, and often makes a parade of what he is not possessed of. That labours for his posterity ; this again leaves his offspring involved in the same necessities he was in himself at his first setting out, and to extricate themselves as they can. The English Americans are averse to war, because they have a great deal to lose ; they take no care to manage the Indians from a belief that they stand in no need of them. The French youth, for very different reasons, abominate the thoughts of peace, and live well with the natives, whose esteem they easily gain in time of war, and their friendship at all times. I might carry the parallel a great way farther, but I am obliged to conclude ; the King's ship is just going to set sail, and the merchantmen are making ready to follow her, so that, perhaps, in three days time, there will not be so much as a single vessel of any sort in the road.

*I am, &c.*

LETTER



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## L E T T E R IV.

*Of the Huron village of Loretto. The causes which have prevented the progress of the French colony of Canada. Of the current money.*

Madam,

Quebec, Feb. 15, 1721.

I AM just returned from a little journey or pilgrimage of devotion, of which I shall give you an account; but I must in the first place inform you, that I was mistaken when in the conclusion of my last letter I had told you, that before three days were over, the road of Quebec would be empty. A ship belonging to Marseilles is still there, and has even found the means of being so under the protection of the ice with which the river is covered. This is a secret which may have its use. It is good to have resources against all accidents that can happen.

The captain of this vessel had taken up his anchors on the second of September towards evening, and after falling down the river about a league, he came to anchor again, in order to wait for some of his passengers, who came on board after it was quite dark. He gave orders to have every thing ready as soon as it should be ebb water, and went early to bed. About midnight, he was wakened with the news that the vessel was filling with water; he cau-

fed all the pumps to be set a going but to no purpose. The water continued to encrease instead of diminishing; at last, every one thought upon saving his life, and it was time, for the last of them had hardly got a-shore when the vessel sunk and entirely disappeared. A bark loaded with merchant goods for Montreal, had the same fate at the entrance into lake St. Peter, but they are in hopes of getting them both up, as soon as the good weather comes in. Some even flatter themselves with being able to recover the greatest part of the effects with which these two vessels are loaded; others believe they will not, and I am of the same opinion; however, I shall not be here to give you an account of it. In the mean time, this affair of the Provençall vessel may be attended with some consequences, for the captain suspects that somebody or other has played him a trick. But to return to our pilgrimage.

About three leagues from this place, towards the North-east, is a small village of the Indians, called Hurons, who are christians, and who have a chapel built on the same model, and with the same dimensions as the Santa Casa of Italy, from whence an Image of the virgin, a copy of that which is in this famous sanctuary, has been sent to our Neophytes. A wilder place than this could not have been chosen for the situation of this mission. In the mean time, the concourse of the faithful to this place, is very great; and whether it be the effect of imagination, devotion, prejudice, or of any other cause, many persons have assured me, that upon their arrival they have been seized with an inward and sacred horror, of which they can give no account. But the solid piety of the inhabitants of this desert, makes an impression upon all, which

is so much the greater, as it is assisted by thought and reflection.

The inhabitants are savages, or Indians, but who derive nothing from their birth and original but what is really estimable, that is to say, the simplicity and openness of the first ages of the world, together with those improvements which Grace has made upon them; a patriarchal faith, a sincere piety, that rectitude and docility of heart which constitute a true saint; an incredible innocence of manners; and lastly, pure Christianity, on which the world has not yet breathed that contagious air which corrupts it; and that frequently attended with acts of the most heroick virtue. Nothing can be more affecting than to hear them sing in two choirs, the men on one side, and the women on the other, the prayers and hymns of the church in their own language. Nor is there any thing which can be compared to that fervour and modesty which they display in all their religious exercises; and I have never seen any one, who was not touched with it to the bottom of his heart.

This village has been formerly much better peopled than at present, but distempers, and I know not what cause, which insensibly reduces to nothing all the nations of this continent, have greatly diminished the number of its inhabitants. The old age and infirmities of some of their ancient pastors had likewise occasioned the falling off of some from their primitive zeal, but it has been no difficult matter to bring them back to it again; and he who directs them at present has nothing to do but to keep things on the same footing in which he found them. It is true, that it is impossible to carry to a farther length than has been done the precautions they use

to prevent the introducing any new relaxation of manners. Intoxicating liquors, the most common and almost the sole stumbling block, which is able to cause the savages to fall off, are prohibited by a solemn vow, the breach of which is submitted to a publick penance, as well as every other fault which occasions scandal ; and a relapse is generally sufficient to banish the criminal without any hopes of return from a place, which ought to be the impregnable fortress and the sacred asylum of piety and innocence. Peace and subordination reign here in a perfect manner ; and this village seems to constitute but one family, which is regulated by the purest maxims of the gospel. This must always occasion matter of surprize to every one, who considers to what a height these people, particularly the Hurons, usually carry their natural fierceness and the love of independance.

The greatest, and perhaps the only trouble which the missionary has, is to find wherewithal to subsist his flock ; the territory which he possesses, not being sufficient for that purpose, and there are very good reasons against abandoning it ; however, Providence supplies this defect. Monsieur and Madame Begon were of our pilgrimage, and were received by our good Neophytes as persons of their rank ought to be, who, at the same time, never suffered them to want the necessaries of life. After a reception, entirely military on the part of the warriors, and the acclamations of the multitude, they began with exercises of piety, which contributed to the mutual edification of all present. This was followed with a general festival at the expence of Madame Begon, who received all the honours of it. The men, according to custom, eat in one house, and the women with the little children in another. I  
call



call it a house and not a cabin, for these Indians have for some time lived after the French manner.

The women on such occasions testify their gratitude only by their silence and modesty ; but because this was the first lady in the colony, who had ever regaled the whole village, an orator was granted to the Huron women, by whose mouth they displayed all the grateful sentiments of their hearts towards their illustrious benefactress. As for the men, after their chief had harangued the Intendant, they danced and sung as much as they thought fit. Nothing, Madam, can be less entertaining than those songs and dances. At first, they seat themselves on the ground, like so many apes without any order ; from time to time one man rises, and advances slowly to the middle of the place, always as they say in cadence, turning his head from one side to the other, and singing an air, containing not the smallest melody to any ear but that of a savage or Indian, and pronouncing a few words which are of no signification. Sometimes it is a war-song, sometimes a death-song, sometimes an attack, or a surprize ; for as these people drink nothing but water, they have no drinking songs, and they have not as yet thought of making any on their amours. Whilst this person is singing, the pit or audience never cease beating time, by drawing from the bottom of their breast a *Hé*, being a note which never varies. The connoisseurs, to whom I refer the matter, pretend that they are never once out in keeping time.

As soon as one person has given over, another takes his place, and this continues till the spectators thank them for their entertainment, which they would not be long of doing were it not convenient

to shew a little complaisance to those people. Their musick is indeed very far from being agreeable, at least, if I may form a judgment of it from what I have heard of it.

It is however quite another thing at church; the women particularly having a surprizing softness of voice, and at the same time a considerable share of taste as well as genius for musick.

On such occasions their harangue or oration is extremely worthy of attention; they explain, in a few words, and almost always in a very ingenious manner, the occasion of the festival, which they never fail to ascribe to very generous motives. The praises of him who is at the expence are not forgotten, and they sometimes take the opportunity, when certain personages, particularly when the Governor-general or Intendant are present, to ask a favour, or to represent their grievances. The orator of the Huron women said that day in his harangue some things so very extraordinary, that we could not help suspecting that the interpreter, then Peter Daniel Ricker, the missionary, had lent him some of his wit and politeness; but he protested he had added nothing of his own; which we believed, because we knew him to be one of the openest and sincerest men in the world.

Before this little journey, I had made some small excursions in the neighbourhood of this city, but as the ground was every where covered with snow to the depth of five or six feet, I have not thereby been enabled to speak much of the nature of the country. Notwithstanding, having before travelled over it at all seasons of the year, I can assure you that you very rarely meet any where else with a more fertile

tile country, or a better soil. I have applied myself particularly this winter to learn what advantages may be drawn from this colony, and I shall now communicate to you the fruit of my enquiries. It is a complaint as old as the colony itself, and not without foundation, that Canada does not enrich France. It is likewise true that none of the inhabitants are rich; but is this the fault of the country itself, or rather of its first settlers? I shall endeavour to put you in the way of forming a judgment on this article.

The original source of the misfortune of these provinces, which they have honoured with the fine name of *New France*, is the report which was at first spread in the kingdom, that there were no mines in them, and their not paying sufficient attention to a much greater advantage which may be drawn from this colony, which is the augmentation of trade; that in order to bring this about settlements must be made; that this is done by little and little, and without being sensibly felt in such a kingdom as France; that the two only objects which present themselves at first view in *Canada* and *Acadia*, I mean the fishery and fur trade, absolutely require that these two countries should be well peopled; and that if they had been so, perhaps, they would have sent greater returns to France, than Spain has drawn from the richest provinces of the New World, especially, if they had added to these articles the building of ships; but the splendor of the gold and silver which came from Peru and Mexico, dazzled the eyes of all Europe in such a manner, that any country which did not produce these precious metals was looked upon as absolutely good for nothing. Let us see what a sensible author who has been on the spot says upon this head.

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The common questions they ask us, says Mark Lescarbot, are, “ Are there any treasures to be found in that country ? Any gold and silver ? ” But nobody enquires whether the people are disposed to hear and relish the doctrines of Christianity. It is, however, certain, that there are mines here, but these must be wrought with industry, labour, and patience. The best mine I know is corn and wine, together with the raising of cattle ; he who possesses these things has money ; but we do not live by mines. The mariners who come in quest of fish from all parts of Europe, above eight or nine hundred leagues from their own country, find the best of mines, without blowing up rocks, digging into the entrails of the earth, or living in the obscurity of the infernal regions.—They find, I say, the best of mines in the bottom of the waters, and in the trade of furs and skins, by which they make good money.”

Not only a bad character has been given to New France without knowing it ; but even those who imagined they should draw advantages from it, have not pursued the measures proper for that purpose. In the first place, they were a very long time in fixing themselves ; they cleared lands without having well examined them, they sowed them, and built houses on them, and afterwards frequently deserted them, without knowing why, and went to settle elsewhere. This inconstancy has contributed more than any thing to make us lose Acadia, and prevent us from drawing any advantage from it, during the time we were in possession of that fine peninsula. The author, already cited, who was a witness of this our wavering and irresolute conduct, scruples not to upbraid those with it who were the most culpable. “ It is thus,” says he, “ that we have



have made levies of armed men, that we have hurried with ardour into new undertakings, that we have laid down and begun the finest projects, and in the end have deserted them all. . . . Indeed to be successful in such enterprizes we ought to be well supported ; but we ought likewise to have men of resolution, who will not retract, but carry this point of honour always in their eyes, *to conquer or die*, it being a great and a glorious thing to die in the execution of a noble design, such as laying the foundations of a new kingdom, or establishing the Christian faith among a people unacquainted with the true God." I could push these reflections a great deal farther, but am cautious of engaging in a dispute, into which I neither can nor ought to enter with the knowledge I have of it at present.

I come now to the commerce of Canada. This has turned for a long time solely upon the fishery and fur-trade. The cod-fishery had been carried on upon the great bank, and the coasts of Newfoundland, long before the discovery of the river St. Laurence, but we were too late in making a settlement on that island, and suffered the English to get the start of us. At last we got possession of the harbour and bay of Placentia, where our royal squadrons have been at anchor oftener than once ; we have withstood sieges there, and the Canadian militia have performed warlike exploits in that place which are not inferior to those of the bravest buccaneers of St. Domingo. They have frequently laid waste the settlements, and ruined the trade of the English in that island ; but that people, from whom we easily took their strongest places, were too well acquainted with their enemies to be disconcerted in their measures. Accustomed to behold the Canadian fire kindle in the frozen regions of the

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north, and go out of its own accord, when it ought to have displayed itself with the greatest activity, they have behaved at the approach of our people, as an experienced pilot does at the sight of an unavoidable tempest. They wisely gave way to the storm, and afterwards, without interruption, repaired the damages their settlements had received from it; and by this conduct, though continually worsted in Newfoundland, whether they acted on the offensive or defensive, they have always carried on an incomparably greater trade than their conquerors, and have at last remained the sole masters and peaceable possessors of that island.

We have behaved still worse in Canada; this great and rich province has been for a long time divided amongst several private persons, none of whom have enriched themselves, whilst the English have made immense profits by the fishery on its coasts. The settlements which these proprietors have made, wanting solidity, and they themselves being destitute of a regular plan, and the one destroying the other, they have left the country nearly in the same condition in which they found it, and in a state of contempt and neglect from which it has not recovered till the moment we lost it. Our enemies were the first who made us sensible of its value.

The only trade to which this colony has been long reduced, is that of furs; and the faults committed in it are past number. Perhaps, our national character never showed itself in a stronger light than in this affair. When we discovered this vast Continent, it was full of wild beasts. A handful of Frenchmen has made them almost entirely disappear in less than an age, and there are some the species of which is entirely destroyed. They killed  
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the elks and mouse-deer merely for the pleasure of killing them, and to shew their dexterity. They had not even the precaution to interpose the authority of the prince to stop such a flagrant disorder. But the greatest mischiefs arose from the insatiable avidity of private persons, who applied themselves solely to this commerce.

They arrived for the most part from France, with nothing but what they had on their backs, and they were impatient to appear in a better situation. At first this was an easy matter; the Indians knew not what riches were contained in their woods, till the rapaciousness with which their furs were bought up made them acquainted with it; prodigious quantities were got from them for trifles, which many would not have been at the trouble to gather together. Even since they have had their eyes opened with respect to the value of this commodity, and have acquired a taste for something more solid, it was for a long time very easy to satisfy them at a small expence; and with a little prudence this trade might have been continued on a tolerable good footing.

Nevertheless, we should be puzzled to name but one family at this day which has grown rich by this traffick. We have seen fortunes equally immense and sudden, rise up, and disappear almost at the same time, not unlike to those moving mountains mentioned by travellers, which the wind raises or throws down in the sandy desarts of Africa. Nothing has been more common in this country than to see people dragging out a languishing old age in misery and disgrace, after having been in a condition to settle themselves on an honourable footing. After all, Madam, those fortunes which private persons, who  
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never deserved them, have failed of acquiring, are not worthy of the publick's regret, if the bad consequences had not fallen upon the colony, which, in a short time, was reduced to the condition of seeing a spring, from whence so much riches might have flowed into its bosom, entirely dried up or diverted into another channel.

Its great plenty was the beginning of its ruin. By means of accumulating beaver skins, which has always been the principal object of this commerce, so great a quantity were heaped up in the warehouses that no vent could be found for them, whence it happened, that the merchants declining to buy any more, our adventurers, called here *Coureurs de Rois*, or hunters, took the resolution of carrying them to the English, and many of them settled in the province of New-York. Several attempts were made to put a stop to the progress of these desertions, but to little effect; on the contrary, those who had been led by motives of interest, to take refuge among their neighbours, were kept there by the fear of punishment; and the vagabonds, who had acquired a taste for a wandering and independant life, remained amongst the savages or Indians, from whom they were no longer distinguishable but by their vices. They frequently had recourse to amnesties to recal those fugitives, which were at first of little consequence; but in the end being managed with prudence, they produced part of the effect promised from them.

Another method was made use of which was still more efficacious; but those people who were zealous for good order and the advancement of religion, found the remedy worse than the disease. This was to grant permission to those in whom they thought they



they could repose confidence to trade in the Indian countries, and to prohibit all others from going out of the colony. The number of these licences was limited, and they were distributed amongst poor widows and orphans, who might sell them to the *Traders* for more or less, according as the trade was good or bad, or according to the nature of the places to which the licences granted the liberty of trading; for they used the precaution to specify those places, to prevent too great a number from going the same way.

Besides those licences, the number of which was regulated by the court, and the distribution of which belonged to the governor-general, there were others for the commandants of forts, and for extraordinary occasions, which the governor still grants under the name of simple *Permissions*. Thus one part of our youth is continually rambling and roving about; and though those disorders, which formerly so much disgraced this profession, are no longer committed, at least not so openly, yet it infects them with a habit of libertinism, of which they never entirely get rid; at least, it gives them a distaste for labour, it exhausts their strength, they become incapable of the least constraint, and when they are no longer able to undergo the fatigues of travelling, which soon happens, for these fatigues are excessive, they remain without the least resource, and are no longer good for any thing. Hence it comes to pass, that arts have been a long time neglected, a great quantity of good land remains still uncultivated, and the country is but very indifferently peopled.

It has been often proposed to abolish those pernicious licences, not with a view of hurting the trade,  
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but even of rendering it more flourishing, and for that purpose to make some French settlements in proper places, where it would be easy to assemble the Indians, at least for certain seasons of the year. By this means, this vast country would be insensibly filled with inhabitants, and perhaps, this is the only method by which that project which the court has so long had at heart of *Frenchifying* the Indians, that is the term they make use of, could be brought about. I believe, I may at least affirm, that if this method had been followed, Canada would have been at present much better peopled than it is; that the Indians drawn and kept together by the comforts and conveniencies of life, which they would have found in our settlements, would not have been so miserable, nor so much addicted to a wandering life, and consequently their numbers would have encreased, whereas they have diminished at a surprising rate, and would have attached themselves to us in such a manner that we might now have disposed of them as of the subjects of the crown; besides, that the missionaries would have had fewer obstacles to encounter with in their conversion. What we now see at Loretto, and amongst a small proportion of the Iroquoise, Algonquins, and Abenakis, settled in the colony, leaves no room to doubt the truth of what I have advanced, and there are none of those who have had the greatest intercourse with the Indians, who do not agree, that these people are not to be depended on; when they are not Christians. I want no other example, but that of the Abenakis, who, though far from being numerous, have been during the two last wars the chief bulwark of New France against New England.

Besides

Besides this project, Madam, which I have been just now explaining to you, is as old as the colony; it was formed by M. de Champlain its founder, and has been approved of by almost all the missionaries I have known, whose painful labours in the situation things have long been in, produce no great good effects, at least in the distant missions. It would be now, indeed, too late to resume this design with respect to the Indians, who disappear in a manner as sensible as it is inconceivable. But what hinders its being followed with respect to the French, and enlarging the colony by degrees, till it should join to that of Louisiana, and thus strengthen the one by the other? It has been in this manner, that the English, in less than a century and a half have peopled above five hundred leagues of the country, and formed a power upon this Continent, which when we view it nearly we cannot but behold with terror.

Canada is capable of furnishing many articles for a trade with the West-India islands, and sometimes actually sends thither no mean quantity of flour, planks, and other timber proper for building. As there is, perhaps, no country in the whole world, which produces more sorts of wood nor of better kinds, you may judge what immense riches may be one day drawn from it. It appears that very few persons are well informed with respect to this point. Nor am I, as yet, sufficiently informed myself, to be able to enter into a more minute detail; I am somewhat better acquainted with what relates to the oil-trade, and shall have occasion to speak of it very soon: As I am in a hurry to finish this letter, I have only time to conclude what relates to the commerce of this country in general.

Nothing has in all appearance contributed more to its decay, than the frequent changes which have been made in the coin. I will give you the history of it in a few words. In 1670, the company of the West-Indies, to whom the king had ceded the right to the property of the French islands on the Continent of America, had leave given to export to the West-India islands, to the amount of one hundred thousand livres, in small pieces, marked with a particular stamp and inscription. The king's edict is dated in the month of February, and bore that those pieces should only pass current in the isles. But in some difficulties which fell out, the council issued on the 18th of November of the year 1672, an *Arret*, by which it was ordained, that the above-mentioned, as well as all other coin which should pass current in France, should also pass current not only in the French islands, but also in those parts of the continent of America, which are subject to the crown, at the rate of thirty-three and one third per cent. advance; that is to say, the pieces of fifteen sols for twenty, and the others in proportion.

The same *Arret* ordained, that all contracts, bills, accounts, bargains, and payments, between all sorts of persons whatsoever, should be made at a certain price in current money, without making use of any exchange or reckoning in sugar, or any other commodity, on pain of nullity of the act. And with respect to transactions by-past, it was ordered, that all stipulations of contracts, bills, debts, quit-rents, leases, or farms of sugar, or other commodities, should be made payable in money, according to the current value of the above coin. In consequence of this arret, the coin encreased one fourth in value in New France, which very soon occasioned many difficulties. In effect, M. de Champigny Noroy, who



who was appointed intendant of Quebec, in 1684, and who is now in the same employ at Havre de Grace, found himself soon embarrassed as well with respect to the payment of the troops, as to the other expences the king must be at in this colony.

And besides the funds which were sent from France, arrived almost always too late, the first of January being the day on which it was absolutely necessary to pay the officers and soldiers, as well as to defray other charges equally indispensable. To obviate the most pressing demands, M. de Champigny thought proper to issue certain bills, which should stand in place of coin, taking care, however, constantly to observe the augmentation of the value of the money. A verbal process was drawn up of this proceeding, and, by virtue of an ordinance of the governor-general and intendant, every piece of this money, which was made of cards, had its value, with the mark of the treasury, and the arms of France, stamped upon it, as were those of the governor and intendant in Spanish wax. Afterwards paper money was struck in France, and stamped with the same impression as the current-money of the realm, and it was ordained, that the bills should be returned into the treasury of Canada every year, before the arrival of the ships from France, in order to receive an additional mark to prevent the introducing of counterfeits.

This paper-money was of no long continuance, so that they returned to the use of card-money, on which new impressions were stamped. The intendant signed such bills as were of four livres and upwards value, only marking the others. In latter times, the governor-general signed also such as were of six livres and above. In the beginning of the Autumn,

all the bills were carried back to the treasurer, who gave bills of exchange for the value on the treasurer-general of the marine at Rochefort, or his clerk, to be charged to the account of the expences of the following year. Such as were spoiled were no longer suffered to pass current, and were burned after having first drawn up a verbal process of it.

Whilst these bills of exchange were faithfully paid, those money-bills were preferred to real specie; as soon as they ceased to be honoured, they gave over carrying the money-bills to the treasurer, so that in 1702, M. de Champigny was at a great deal of pains to no purpose in endeavouring to retire all those he had made. His successors were under the necessity of making new ones every year, for paying of salaries, which multiplied them to such a degree, that at last they became of no value at all, and nobody would receive them in payment. The consequence of this was an entire stagnation of trade, and the disorder went so far, that in 1713, the inhabitants proposed to lose one half, on condition that the king should take them up and pay the other half.

This proposal was agreed to the year following, but the orders given, in consequence thereof, were not fully executed till 1717. A declaration was then published, abolishing these money-bills, when they begun paying the salaries of the officers of the colony in silver. The augmentation of one fourth advance, was abrogated at the same time: Experience having made it appear, that the augmentation of the species in a colony does not keep the money from going out of it as had been pretended, and that money could never have a free and proper circulation, but by paying in commodities whatever was

was imported from France. In effect, in this case, the colony keeps her money at home, whereas in the supposition that she has not merchandize sufficient to pay for all that she receives, she is obliged to pay the balance in silver, and how should it be otherwise?

In a word, Madam, you will be surprized when I tell you, that in 1706, the trade of the most ancient of all our colonies was carried on in a bottom, or capital of no more than 650,000 livres, and things have since been pretty much in the same situation. Now this sum divided amongst thirty thousand inhabitants is neither capable of enriching them, nor of enabling them to purchase the commodities of France. For this reason, most part of them go stark naked, especially those that live in remote habitations. They have not even so much as the advantage of selling the surplus of their commodities to the inhabitants of cities, these being obliged, in order to subsist, to have lands in the country, and to cultivate them themselves for their own account.

After the king had taken Canada back again out of the hands of the companies, his majesty expended considerably more on it for several years than he has done since; and the colony in those times sent into France to the value of near one million livres in beaver yearly, notwithstanding it was not so populous as at present: But she has always drawn more from France than she has been able to pay, doing just as a private person would, who with a revenue of thirty thousand livres, should spend at the rate of upwards of forty thousand. By this means, her credit has sunk, and so has brought on the ruin of her trade, which, since the year 1706,

consisted of scarce any thing besides what is called the lesser peltry. Every merchant would be concerned in it which has occasioned its ruin, as they often paid more for them to the Indians than they were able to sell them for in France.

*I am, &c.*

LETTER



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## L E T T E R V.

*Of the beavers of Canada ; in what they differ from those of Europe ; of their manner of building ; of the advantage which may accrue to the colony from them ; of the hunting of the beaver and musk-rat.*

Quebec, March 1, 1721.

Madam,

**I** Ought to have set out within a day or two after writing my last letter ; but I am still detained for want of a carriage. In the mean-time, I cannot do better than entertain you with an account of the curiosities of this country. I shall begin with the most singular article of all, that is to say, the beaver. The spoil of this animal has hitherto been the principal article in the commerce of New France. It is itself one of the greatest wonders in nature, and may very well afford many a striking lesson of industry, foresight, dexterity, and perseverance in labour.

The beaver was not unknown in France before the discovery of America ; we find in the ancient books of the Hatters of Paris, regulations for the

manufacture of beaver-hats ; now the beaver of America and Europe are absolutely the same animal ; but whether it is, that the European beavers are become extremely rare ; or that their fur is not equally good in quality with that of the beavers of America, there is no longer mention made of any, besides this latter, except it is with respect to the Castoreum, of which I shall say a word or two in the end of this letter. I do not even know that any author has mentioned this animal, as an object of curiosity, perhaps, for want of having observed it closely enough ; perhaps too, because the European beavers are of the nature of land beavers, the difference of which from the others I shall presently shew you.

However this be, the beaver of Canada is an amphibious quadruped, which cannot live for any long time in the water, and which is able to live entirely without it, provided it have the conveniency of bathing itself sometimes. The largest beavers are somewhat less than four feet in length and fifteen inches in breadth over the haunches, weighing about sixty pounds. Its colour is different according to the different climates, in which it is found. In the most distant northern parts they are generally quite black, though there are sometimes found beavers entirely white. In the most temperate countries they are brown, their colour becoming lighter and lighter in proportion as they approach toward the south. In the country of the Illinois, they are almost yellow, and some are even seen of a straw-colour. It has also been observed, that in proportion as their colour is lighter they yield a less quantity of fur, and consequently are less valuable. This is plainly the work of Providence, which secures them from the cold in proportion as they are exposed to it.

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The fur is of two sorts all the body over, excepting at the feet, where it is very short. The longest of it is from eight to ten lines in length, and it even goes sometimes on the back as far as two inches, diminishing gradually towards the head and tail. This part of the fur is harsh, coarse, and shining, and is properly that which gives the animal its colour. In viewing it through a microscope, you observe the middle less opaque, which proves it to be hollow, for which cause no use is ever made of it. The other part of the fur is a very thick and fine down, of an inch in length at most, and is what is commonly manufactured. In Europe, it was formerly known by the name of Muscovia wool. This is properly the coat of the beaver, the first serving only for ornament, and perhaps to assist him in swimming.

It is pretended that the beaver lives fifteen or twenty years; that the female carries her young four months, and that her ordinary litter is four, though some travellers have raised it to eight, which as I believe happens but rarely. She has four teats, two on the great pectoral muscle between the second and third of the true ribs, and two about four fingers higher. The muscles of this animal are exceeding strong, and thicker in appearance than its size requires. Its intestines on the contrary are extremely slender, its bones very hard, and its two jaws which are almost equal, surprizingly strong; each of these is furnished with ten teeth, two incisive and eight molar. The superior incisives are two inches and a half long, the inferior upwards of three, following the bending of the jaw, which gives them a prodigious and surprising force for so small an animal. It has been further observed, that the two jaws do not exactly correspond, but that the superior

rior advances considerably over the inferior, so that they cross like the two blades of a pair of scissars : Lastly, that the length of both the one and the other is precisely the third part of their root.

The head of the beaver is very near like that of a mountain rat. Its snout is pretty long, the eyes little, the ears short, round, hairy on the outside, and smooth within. Its legs are short, particularly the forelegs, which are only four or five inches long, and pretty much like those of the badger. The nails are made obliquely and hollow like quills, the hind feet are quite different, being flat and furnished with membranes between the toes ; thus the beaver can walk though slowly, and swims with the same ease as any other aquatick animal. Besides, in respect of its tail, it is altogether a fish, having been juridically declared such by the faculty of medicine of Paris, in consequence of which declaration, the faculty of theology have decided that it might be lawfully eaten on meagre days. M. Lemery was mistaken in saying, that this decision regarded only the hinder part of the beaver. It has been placed all of it in the same class with mackrel.

It is true, that hitherto we have not been able to profit much by this toleration ; the beavers are at present so far from our habitations, that it is rare to meet with any that are eatable. Our Indians who live among us keep it after having dried it in the smoke, and I give you my word, Madam, it is the worst eating I ever tasted. It is also necessary when you have got fresh beaver, to give it a boiling in order to take away a very disagreeable relish. With this precaution, it is exceeding good eating, there being no sort of meat either lighter, more wholesome, or more delicious, it is even affirmed to be as nourishing



rishing as veal ; when boiled it stands in need of some seasoning to give it a relish, but roasted has no need of any thing. What is most remarkable in this amphibious animal is its tail. This is almost oval, four inches broad at the root, five in the middle, and three at the extremity, I mean, however, in large beavers only. It is an inch thick, and a foot in length. Its substance is a firm fat, or tender cartilage, much like the flesh of the porpoise, but which grows harder when it is kept for any considerable time. It is covered with a scaly skin, the scales of which are hexagonal, half a line in thickness, from three to four lines long, and resting upon each other like those of fishes. An extream slender pellicle serves to support them, and they are indented so as to be easily separated after the death of the animal.

This is in brief the description of this curious creature. If you would have a still greater detail of it, you may satisfy yourself by looking into the memoirs of the royal academy of sciences for the year 1704. The anatomical description of the beaver has been inserted in it, done by M. Sarrafin correspondent of the academy, king's physician in this country, and expert in medicine, anatomy, surgery, and botany ; and a man of very fine accomplishments, who distinguishes himself no less in the superior council of which he is member, than by his abilities in every point relating to his profession. It is really matter of surprize to find a man of such universal merit in a colony. But to return to the beaver.

The true testicles of this amphibious animal were not known to the antients, probably, because they were very little, and lay concealed in the loins. They

They had given this name to the bags in which the castoreum is contained, which are very different, and in number four in the lower belly of the beaver. The two first, which are called superior, from their being more elevated than the rest, are of the form of a pear, and communicate with each other like the two pockets of a knapsack. The other two which are called inferior are roundish towards the bottom. The former contain a soft, resinous, adhesive matter, mixed with small fibres, greyish without, and yellow within, of a strong disagreeable and penetrating scent, and very inflammable, which is the true castoreum. It hardens in the air in a month's time, and becomes brown, brittle, and friable. When they have a mind to cause it harden sooner than ordinary, 'tis only placing it in a chimney.

It is pretended that the castoreum which comes from Dantzick is better than that of Canada; I refer it to the Druggists. It is certain that the bags which contain this latter are smaller, and that even here the largest are the most esteemed. Besides their thickness, they must also be heavy, brown, of a strong penetrating scent, full of a hard, bitter, and friable matter, of the same colour, or yellowish interwoven with a delicate membrane, and of an acrid taste. The properties of castoreum are to attenuate viscous matter, fortify the brain, cure the vapours, provoke the menses in women, prevent corruption, and cause ill humours to evaporate by perspiration. It is also used with success against the epilepsy, or falling-sickness, the palsy, apoplexy, and deafness.

The inferior bags contain an unctuous and fattish liquor like honey. Its colour is of a pale yellow, its odour fetid, little different from that of the castoreum,

reum, but somewhat weaker and more disagreeable. It thickens as it grows older, and takes the consistence of tallow. This liquor is a resolvent, and a fortifier of the nerves, for which purpose it must be applied upon the part. It is besides a folly to say with some authors on the faith of the antient naturalists, that when the beaver finds himself pursued, to save his life he bites off these pretended testicles which he abandons to the hunters. It is his fur he ought then to strip himself of, in comparison of which all the rest is of little value. It is, however, owing to this fable that this animal got the name of Castor. Its skin, after being stript of the fur, is not to be neglected ; of it are made gloves and stockings, as might several other things, but it being difficult to take off all the fur without cutting it they make use of the skin of the land beaver.

You have, perhaps, heard of green and dry beaver, and you may also be desirous to know the difference ; which is this. The dry beaver is its skin before it has been employed in any use : the green beaver are such as have been worn by the Indians, who, after having well tawed them on the inside, and rubbed them with the marrow of certain animals, with which I am not acquainted, in order to render them more pliant, sew several of them together, making a sort of garment, which they call a robe, and in which they wrap themselves with the fur inwards. They never put it off in winter, day nor night ; the long hair soon falls off, the down remaining and becoming more oily, in which condition it is much fitter to be worked up by the hatters ; who cannot make any use of the dry, without a mixture of this fat fur along with it. They pretend it ought to have been worn from fifteen to eighteen months to be in its perfection. I leave you

to judge whether our first traders were simple enough to let the Indians know what a valuable commodity their old cloaths were. It was, however, impossible to keep a secret of this nature for any considerable time, being entrusted to a passion which immediately betrays itself. About thirty years ago one Guigues, who had had the farm of the beaver, finding a prodigious quantity of this fur upon his hands, bethought himself, in order to create a vent for it, of having it spun and carded with wool, and of this composition he caused make cloths, flannels, stocking, and other such like manufactures, but with small success. This trial shewed that the fur of the beaver was only fit for making hats. It is too short to be capable of being spun alone, and a great deal more than one half must consist of wool, so that there is very little profit to be made by this manufacture. There is, however, one of this sort still kept up in Holland, where you meet with cloaths and druggets of it ; but these stuffs come dear, and besides do not wear well. The beaver wool very soon leaves it, forming on the surface a sort of nap which destroys all its lustre. The stockings which have been made of it in France had the same defect.

These, Madam, are all the advantages the beavers are capable of affording the commerce of this colony : their foresight, their unanimity, and that wonderful subordination we so much admire in them, their attention to provide conveniencies, of which we could not before imagine brutes capable of perceiving the advantages, afford mankind still more important lessons, than the ant to whom the holy scripture sends the sluggard. They are at least amongst the quadrupeds, what the bees are amongst winged insects. I have not heard persons well informed



formed say, that they have a king or queen, and it is not true, that when they are at work in a body, there is a chief or a leader who gives orders and punishes the slothful ; but by virtue of that instinct which this animal has from him, whose Providence governs them, every one knows his own proper office, and every thing is done without confusion, and in the most admirable order. Perhaps, after all, the reason why we are so struck with it is for want of having recourse to that sovereign intelligence, who makes use of creatures void of reason, the better to display his wisdom and power, and to make us sensible that our reason itself is almost always, through our presumption, the cause of our mistakes.

The first thing which our ingenious brutes do, when they are about to chuse a habitation, is to call an assembly if you please, of the states of the province. However this be, there are sometimes three or four hundred of them together in one place, forming a town which might properly enough be called a little Venice. First of all they pitch upon a spot where there are plenty of provisions, with all the materials necessary for building. Above all things water is absolutely necessary, and in case they can find neither lake nor pool, they supply that defect by stopping the course of some rivulet, or of some small river, by means of a dyke, or to speak in the language of this country, of a causeway. For this purpose, they set about felling of trees, but higher than the place where they have resolved to build ; three or four beavers place themselves round some great tree, and find ways and means to lay it along the ground with their teeth. This is not all ; they take their measures so well, that it always falls towards the water, to the end they may have

have less way to drag it, after cutting it into proper lengths. They have afterwards only to roll those pieces so cut towards the water, where, after they have been launched, they navigate them towards the place where they are to be employed.

These pieces are more or less thick or long, according as the nature and situation of the place require, for these architects foresee every thing. Sometimes they make use of the trunks of great trees, which they place in a flat direction; sometimes the causeway consists of piles nearly as thick as one's thigh, supported by strong stakes, and interwoven with small branches; and every where the vacant spaces are filled with a fat earth so well applied, that not a drop of water passes through. The beavers prepare this earth with their feet; and their tail not only serves instead of a trowel for building; but also serves them instead of a wheelbarrow for transporting this mortar, which is performed by trailing themselves along on their hinder feet. When they have arrived at the water-side, they take it up with their teeth, and apply it first with their feet, and then plaister it with their tail. The foundations of these dykes are commonly ten or twelve feet thick, diminishing always upward, till at last they come to two or three; the strictest proportion is always exactly observed; the rule and the compass are in the eye of the great master of arts and sciences. Lastly, it has been observed, that the side towards the current of the water is always made sloping, and the other side quite upright. In a word, it would be difficult for our best workmen to build any thing either more solid or more regular.

The construction of the cabins is no less wonderful. These are generally built on piles in the mid-

middle of those small lakes formed by the dykes ; sometimes on the bank of a river, or at the extremity of some point advancing into the water. Their figure is round or oval, and their roofs are arched like the bottom of a basket. Their partitions are two feet thick, the materials of them being the same, though less substantial, than those in the causeways ; and all is so well plaistered with clay in the inside, that not the smallest breath of air can enter. Two thirds of the edifice stands above water, and in this part each beaver has his place assigned him, which he takes care to floor with leaves or small branches of pine-trees. There is never any ordure to be seen here, and to this end, besides the common gate of the cabin and another issue by which these animals go out to bathe, there are several openings by which they discharge their excrements into the water. The common cabins lodge eight or ten beavers, and some have been known to contain thirty, but this is rarely seen. All of them are near enough to have an easy communication with each other.

The winter never surprizes the beavers. All the works I have been mentioning are finished by the end of September, when every one lays in his winter-stock of provisions. Whilst their business leads them abroad into the country or woods, they live upon the fruit, bark, and leaves of trees ; they fish also for crawfish and some other kinds ; every thing is then at the best. But when the business is to lay in a store, sufficient to last them, whilst the earth is hid under the snow, they put up with wood of a soft texture, such as poplars, aspens, and other such like trees. These they lay up in piles, and dispose in such wise, as to be always able to come at the pieces which have been softened in the water. It has

been constantly remarked, that these piles are more or less large, according as the winter is to be longer or shorter, which serves as an Almanack to the Indians, who are never mistaken with respect to the duration of the cold. The beavers before they eat the wood, cut it into small slender pieces, and carry it into their apartment ; each cabin having only one store-room for the whole family.

When the melting of the snow is at its greatest height as it never fails to occasion great inundations, the beavers quit their cabins which are no longer habitable, every one shifting for himself as well as he can. The females return thither as soon as the waters are fallen, and it is then they bring forth their young. The males keep abroad till towards the month of July, when they re-assemble, in order to repair the breaches which the swelling of the waters may have made in their cabbins or dykes. In case these have been destroyed by the hunters, or provided they are not worth the trouble of repairing them, they set about building of others ; but they are often obliged to change the place of their abode, and that for many reasons. The most common is for want of provisions ; they are also driven out by the hunters, or by carnivorous animals, against whom they have no other defence than flight alone. One might reasonably wonder, that the author of nature should have given a less share of strength to the most part of useful animals than to such as are not so ; if this very thing did not make a brighter display of his power and wisdom, in causing the former, notwithstanding their weakness to multiply much faster than the latter.

There are places to which the beavers seem to have so strong a liking that they can never leave them



them though they are constantly disturbed in them. On the way from Montreal to Lake Huron, by way of the great river, is constantly found every year a nest which those animals build or repair every summer; for the first thing which those travellers, who arrive first do, is to break down the cabin and dyke which supplies it with water. Had not this causeway dammed up the water, there would not have been sufficient to continue their voyages, so that of necessity there must have been a carrying-place; so that it seems those officious beavers post themselves there entirely for the conveniency of passengers.

The Indians were formerly of opinion, if we may believe some accounts, that the beavers were a species of animals endued with reason, which had a government, laws, and language of their own; that this amphibious commonwealth chose chiefs or officers, who in the publick works assigned to each his task, placed sentries to give the alarm at the approach of an enemy, and who punished the lazy corporally, or with exile. Those pretended exiles are such as are probably called land beavers, who actually live separate from the others, never work, and live under-ground, where their sole business is to make themselves a covered way to the water. They are known by the small quantity of fur on their backs, proceeding, without doubt from their rubbing themselves continually against the ground. And besides, they are lean, which is the consequence of their laziness; they are found in much greater plenty in warm than in cold countries. I have already taken notice that our European beavers are much liker these last than the others; and Lemery actually says, that they retire into holes and caverns on the banks of rivers, and especially in Poland. There are

also some of them in Germany, along the shores of the Ebro in Spain, and on the Rhone, the Iser, and the Oise in France. What is certain is, that we see not so much of the marvellous in the European beavers, for which those of Canada are so highly distinguished. Your ladyship will certainly agree with me, that it is great pity, none of these wonderful creatures were ever found either on the Tiber or on Parnassus ; how many fine things would they have given occasion to the Greek and Roman poets to say on that subject.

It appears, that the Indians of Canada did not give them much disturbance before our arrival in their country. The skins of the beaver were not used by those people by way of garments, and the flesh of bears, elks, and some other wild beasts, seemed, in all probability, preferable to that of the beaver. They were, however, in use to hunt them, and this hunting had both its season and ceremonial fixed ; but when people hunt only out of necessity, and when this is confined to pure necessities, there is no great havock made ; thus when we arrived in Canada we found a prodigious number of these creatures in it.

The hunting of the beaver is not difficult ; this animal shewing not near so much strength in defending himself, or dexterity in shunning the snares of his enemies, as he discovers industry in providing himself good lodgings, and foresight in getting all the necessities of life. It is during the winter that war is carried on against him in form ; that is to say, from the beginning of November to the month of April. At that time, like most other animals, he has the greatest quantity of fur, and his skin is thinnest. This hunting is performed four ways,  
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with nets, by lying upon the watch, by opening the ice, and with gins. The first and third are generally joined together; the second way is seldom made use of; the little eyes of this animal being so sharp, and its hearing so acute, that it is difficult to get within shot of it, before it gains the water-side, from which it never goes far at this time of the year, and in which it dives immediately. It would even be lost after being wounded, in case it is able to reach the water, for when mortally wounded it never comes up again. The two last manners are therefore most generally practised.

Though the beavers lay up their winter provision, they notwithstanding from time to time make some excursions into the woods in quest of fresher and more tender food, which delicacy of theirs sometimes costs them their lives. The Indians lay traps in their way made nearly in the form of the figure 4, and for a bait place small bits of tender wood newly cut. The beaver no sooner touches it, than a large log falls upon his body, which breaks his back, when the hunter, coming up, easily dispatches him. The method by opening the ice requires more precaution, and is done in this manner. When the ice is yet but half a foot in thickness, an opening is made with a hatchet; thither the beavers come for a supply of fresh air; the hunters watch for them at the hole, and perceive them coming at a great distance, their breath occasioning a considerable motion in the water; thus it is easy for them to take their measures for knocking them in the head the moment they raise it above water. In order to make sure of their game, and to prevent their being perceived by the beavers, they cover the hole with the leaves of reeds, and of the plant *Typha*, and after they understand that the animal is

within reach, they seize him by one of his legs, throw him upon the ice, and dispatch him before he recovers from his consternation.

When their cabin happens to be near some rivulet, the hunting of the beaver is still more easy. They cut the ice cross-wise, in order to spread a net under it; they afterwards break down the cabin. The beavers that are within it, never fail to make towards the rivulet, where they are taken in the net. But they must not be suffered to remain in it for any time, as they would very soon extricate themselves, by cutting it with their teeth. Those whose cabins are in lakes, have, at the distance of three or four hundred paces from the water-side, a kind of country house for the benefit of the air; in hunting of these the huntsmen divide into two bodies, one breaks the house in the country, whilst the other falls upon that in the lake; the beavers which are in this last, and they pitch upon the time when they are all at home, run for sanctuary to the other, where they find themselves bewildered in a cloud of dust, which has been raised on purpose, and which blinds them so, that they are subdued with ease. Lastly, in some places, they content themselves with making an opening in their causeways; by this means, the beavers find themselves soon on dry ground; so that they remain without defence; or else they run to put some remedy to the disorder, the cause of which is as yet unknown to them; and as the hunters are ready to receive them, it is rare that they fail, or at least that they return empty-handed.

There are several other particularities with respect to the beavers, which I find in some memoirs, the truth of which I will not take upon me to maintain.



tain. It is pretended, that when these animals have discovered hunters, or any of those beasts of prey which make war on them, they dive to the bottom, beating the water with their tails with so prodigious a noise, as to be heard at the distance of half a league. This is probably to warn the rest to be upon their guard. It is said also, that they are of so quick a scent, that when they are in the water they will perceive a canoe at a great distance. But they add, that they see only side-ways like the hares, which defect often delivers them into the hands of the hunters, whom they would endeavour to avoid. Lastly, it is asserted, that when the beaver has lost his mate, he never couples with another, as is related of the turtle.

The Indians take great care to hinder their dogs from touching the bones of the beaver, they being so very hard as to spoil their teeth. The same thing is said of the bones of the porcupine. The common run of these barbarians give another reason for this precaution, which is, say they, for fear of irritating the spirits of those animals, which might render their hunting unprosperous another time. But I am inclined to be of opinion, that this reason was found out after the practice was established; for thus has superstition usurped the place of natural causes to the shame of human understanding. I moreover wonder, Madam, that no attempt has hitherto been made to transport to France some of these wonderful creatures; we have many places where they might find every thing proper for building and subsistence, and I am of opinion they would multiply greatly in a short time.

We have also in this country a little animal of much the same nature with the beaver, and which on many accounts appears to be a diminutive of it, called the *Musk-rat*. This has almost all the properties of the beaver; the structure of the body, and especially of the head, is so very like, that we should be apt to take the musk-rat for a small beaver, were his tail only cut off, in which he differs little from the common European rat; and were it not for his testicles, which contain a most exquisite musk. This animal, which weighs about four pounds, is pretty like that which Ray speaks of under the name of the *Mus Alpinus*. He takes the field in March, at which time his food consists of bits of wood, which he peels before he eats them. After the dissolving of the snows he lives upon the roots of nettles, and afterwards on the stalks and leaves of that plant. In summer he lives on strawberries and raspberries, which succeed the other fruits of the Autumn. During all this time you rarely see the male and female asunder.

At the approach of winter they separate, when each takes up his lodgings apart by himself in some hole, or in the hollow of a tree, without any provision, and the Indians assure us, that they eat not the least morsel of any thing whilst the cold continues. They likewise build cabins nearly in the form of those of the beavers, but far from being so well executed. As to their place of abode, it is always by the water-side, so that they have no need to build causeways. It is said, that the fur of the musk-rat is used in the manufacture of hats, along with that of the beaver, without any disadvantage. Its flesh is tolerable good eating, except in time of rut, at which season it is impossible to cure it of a  
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relish of musk, which is far from being as agreeable to the taste, as it is to the scent. I was very much disposed to give your Grace an account of the other kinds of hunting practised amongst our Indians, and of the animals which are peculiar to this country; but I am obliged to refer this part to some other opportunity, as I am this moment told that my carriage is ready.

*I am, &c.*

LETTER





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# L E T T E R VI.

*Voyage from Quebec to the Three Rivers. Of riding post on the snow. Of the lordships of New France. Description of Beckancourt. Tradition with respect to the origin of the name of the Stinking River. Description of the Three Rivers. Sequel of the huntings of the Indians.*

*Three Rivers, March 6, 1721.*

*Madam,*

I Arrived yesterday in this town, after a journey of two days, and though it is twenty-five leagues distant from Quebec, I could very easily have travelled the whole of it in twelve hours, as I took the way of a *Combiature*, which the snow and ice render exceeding easy in this country in the winter season, and as it is full as cheap as the common way of travelling. They make use of a sledge for this purpose, or of what the French here call a *Carriole*, which glides so smoothly, that one horse is enough to draw it at full gallop, which is their ordinary pace. They frequently change horses and have them very cheap. In case of necessity, one might travel this way sixty leagues in twenty-four hours

hours, and much more commodiously than in the best post-chaise in the world.

I lay the first night at *Pointe aux Trembles*, seven leagues from the capital, from whence I set out at eleven at night. This is one of the better sort of parishes in this country. The church is large and well-built, and the inhabitants are in very good circumstances. In several the ancient planters are richer than the lords of the manors, the reason of which is this: Canada was only a vast forest when the French first settled in it. Those to whom lordships were given, were not proper persons to cultivate them themselves. They were officers, gentlemen, or communities, who had not funds sufficient to procure and maintain the necessary number of workmen upon them. It was therefore necessary to settle and plant them with inhabitants, who, before they could raise what was sufficient to maintain them, were obliged to labour hard, and even to lay out all the advances of money. Thus they held of the lords at a very slender quit-rent, so that with fines of alienation, which were here very small, and what is called the *Droit du moulin & Metairie*, a lordship of two leagues in front, and of an unlimited depth, yields no great revenue in a country so thinly peopled, and with so little inland trade.

This was no doubt one reason, which induced the late King Lewis XIV. to permit all noblemen and gentlemen, settled in Canada, to exercise commerce as well by sea as land, without question, interruption, or derogating from their quality and rights. These are the terms of the arrêt, passed by the council on the 10th of March, 1685. Moreover, there are in this country, no lordships, even amongst those which give titles, who have right of

patronage; for on the pretension of some lords, founded on their having built the parish church, his majesty in council, pronounced the same year 1685, that this right belonged to the bishop alone, as well because he ought to be better able to judge of the capacity of the candidates, than any other person, as because the salaries of the curates are paid out of the tithes, which belong to the bishop. The king in the same arrêt further declares, that the right of patronage is not deemed honorary.

I set out from *Pointe aux Trembles* on the fourth, before day-break, with a horse blind of an eye, which I afterwards exchanged for a lame one, and this again for one that was broken-winded. With these three relays, I travelled seventeen leagues in seven or eight hours, and arrived early at the house of the baron de Beckancourt, grand-master, or inspector of the highways of Canada, who would not suffer me to go any farther. This gentleman too has a village of Abenakis Indians on his lands, which is governed in spiritual matters by a Jesuit, to whom I gladly paid my respects as I passed. The baron lives at the mouth of a little river which comes from the south, and whose whole course is within his estate, which is also known by his own name. It is not however this large tract which has been erected into a barony, but that on the other side of the river.

The life M. de Beckancourt leads in this desert, there being as yet no inhabitant in it besides the lord, recalls naturally enough the way of living of the ancient patriarchs to our memory, who were not above putting their hands to work with their servants in country-work, and lived almost in the same sobriety and temperance with them. The profit to be made by trading with the Indians in his neigh-

neighbourhood, by buying furs at the first-hand, is well worth all the quit-rents he could receive from any planters to whom he could have parcelled out his lands. In time it will be in his own option to have vassals, when he may have much better terms, after having first cleared all his estate. The river of Beckancourt was formerly called the Stinking-River: I acquainted myself with the occasion of this name, as the water of it appeared to be clear and excellent in other respects, which was also confirmed by others, and that there was no such thing as a disagreeable scent in the whole country, I was however, told by others, that this name was owing to the bad quality of the waters; others again attributed it to the great quantity of musk-rats found on it, the smell of which is intolerable to an Indian; a third account, and which is related by such as have made deeper researches into the ancient history of the country, and which is therefore pretended to be the true one, is as follows.

Some Algonquins, being at war with the Onnontcharonnons, better known by the name of the nation of the Iroquet, and whose ancient abode was, say they, in the island of Montreal. The name they bear proves them to be of the Huron language; notwithstanding, it is pretended that the Hurons were they who drove them from their ancient residence, and who have even in part destroyed them. Be this as it will, they were, at the time I have been mentioning, at war with the Algonquins, who, to put an end to the war, they began to be weary of, at one blow, bethought themselves of a stratagem which succeeded according to their wishes. They took the field, by occupying both sides of the little river, now called the river of Beckancourt. They afterwards detached some canoes, the crews of which feigned



feigned as if they were fishing in the river. They knew their enemies were at no great distance, and made no doubt they would immediately fall upon the pretended fishers ; in fact, they soon fell upon them with a large fleet of canoes, when they again counterfeiting fear, took to flight and gained the banks of the river. They were followed close by the enemy, who made sure of destroying an handful of men, who to draw them the deeper into the snare, affected an extraordinary panick. This feint succeeded ; the pursuers continued to advance, and as the custom is of those barbarians raising a most horrible shouting, they imagined they had now nothing to do, but to launch forth and seize their prey.

At the same instant, a shower of arrows discharged from behind the bushes, which lined the river, threw them into a confusion, from which they were not suffered to recover. A second discharge, which followed close upon the first, compleated the rout. They wanted to fly in their turn, but could no longer make use of their canoes, which were bored on all sides. They plunged into the water, in hopes of escaping that way, but besides, that most of them were wounded, they found, on reaching the shore, the fate they sought to shun, so that not a soul escaped the Algonquins, who gave no quarter, nor made any prisoners. The nation of the Iroquet have never recovered this check, and though some of these Indians have been seen since the arrival of the French in Canada, there is now no doubt of their having been entirely destroyed long since. However, the number of dead bodies, which remained in the water, and on the banks of the river, infected it to such a degree, that it has kept the name of the Stinking-River ever since.

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The Abenauquise town of Beckancourt is not now so populous as formerly. They would, certainly, for all that, be of great service to us in case a war should happen to break out. These Indians are the best partisans in the whole country, and are always very ready to make inroads into New-England, where the name of them has thrown terror even into Boston itself. They would be equally serviceable to us against the Iroquois, to whom they are nothing inferior in bravery, and whom they much surpass in point of discipline. They are all Christians, and an handsome chapel has been built for them, where they practise with much edification, all the duties of Christian devotion. It must, however, be acknowledged, that their fervour is not so conspicuous as formerly when they first settled among us. Since that time, they have been made acquainted with the use of spirituous liquors, which they have taken a taste to, and of which no Indian ever drinks but on purpose to intoxicate himself; notwithstanding, fatal experience has taught us, that in proportion as men deviate from their duty to God, the less regard do they entertain for their persons, and the nearer do they draw to the English. It is much to be feared the Lord should permit them to become enemies to us, to punish us for having contributed thereto, from motives of sordid interest, and for having helped to make them vicious as has already happened to some nations.

After embracing the missionary at Beckancourt, visiting his canton, and making with him melancholy reflections on the inevitable consequences of this disorder I have been mentioning, and for which he is often under the necessity of making his moan before the Lord; I crossed the river St. Lawrence, in order to get to this town. Nothing, Madam, can  
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possibly exceed the delightfulness of its situation. It is built on a sandy declivity, on which there is just barren ground sufficient to contain the town, if ever it come to be a large place; for at present it is far from being considerable. It is, moreover, surrounded with every thing that can contribute to render a place at once rich and pleasant. The river, which is near half a league over, washes its foundations. Beyond this you see nothing but cultivated lands, and those extremely fertile, and crowned with the noblest forests in the universe. A little below, and on the same side with the town, the St. Lawrence receives a fine river, which just before it pays the tribute of its own waters, receives those of two others, one on the right, and the other on the left, from whence this place has the name of the Three Rivers.

Above, and almost at an equal distance, lake St. Peter begins, which is about three leagues broad and seven long. Thus there is nothing to confine the prospect on that side, and the sun seems to set in the water. This lake, which is no more than a widening of the river, receives several rivers. It is probable enough that these rivers have, in a course of years, worn away the low moving earth on which they flowed; this is very sensible with respect to lake St. Francis, in the mouth of which are several islands, which might have formerly been joined to the Continent. Besides, over all the lake, except in the middle of the channel, which is kept at its full depth by the force of the current, there is no sailing except in canoes, and there are even some places, where large canoes, ever so little loaded, cannot easily pass; to make amends, it is every where well stored with fish, and that too of the most excellent sorts.

They reckon but about seven or eight hundred souls on the Three Rivers; but it has in its neighbourhood sufficient wherewithal to enrich a great city. There is exceeding plentiful iron mines, which may be made to turn to account whenever it is judged proper \*. However, notwithstanding the small number of inhabitants in this place, its situation renders it of vast importance, and it is also one of the most ancient establishments in the colony. This post has always, even from the most early times, had a governor. He has a thousand crowns salary, with an *Etat Major*. Here is a convent of Recollets; a very fine parish church, where the same fathers officiate, and a noble hospital adjoining to a convent of Ursuline nuns, to the number of forty, who serve the hospital. This is also a foundation of M. de St. Vallier. As early as the year 1650, the seneschal or high steward of New France, whose jurisdiction was absorbed in that of the supreme council of Quebec, and of the intendant, had a lieutenant at the Three Rivers; at this day this city has an ordinary tribunal for criminal matters, the chief of which is a lieutenant-general.

This city owes its origin to the great concourse of Indians, of different nations, at this place in the beginning of the colony. There resorted to it chiefly several from the most distant quarters of the north by way of the Three Rivers, which have given this city its name, and which are navigable a great way upwards. The situation of the place joined to the great trade carried on at it, induced some French to settle here, and the nearness of the river Sorel, then called the Iroquois river, and of which I shall soon take notice, obliged the governors-general to

\* They are now actually working them, and they produce some of the best iron in the world.



build a Fort here, where they kept a good garrison, and which at first had a governor of its own. Thus this post was henceforwards looked upon as one of the most important places in New France. After some years the Indians, weary of the continual ravages of the Iroquois, and from whom the French themselves had enough to do to defend themselves, and the passes being no longer free in which those Indians lay in ambush, and finding themselves hardly secure, even under the cannon of our fort, they left off bringing their furs. The jesuits, with all the new converts they could gather, retired to a place three leagues below, which had been given them by the Abbé de la Madeleine, one of the members of the company of the Hundred Associates, erected by cardinal Richelieu, from whence this spot had the name of Cap de la Madeleine, which it still bears \*.

The mission transported thither did not however subsist long. This is partly the effect of the levity natural to the Indians, but chiefly to a series of wars and diseases, which have almost wholly destroyed this infant church. You find, however, in the neighbourhood a company of Algonquins, most of whom have been baptised in their infancy, but have no outward exercise of religion. The members of the West-India Company, who have at present the farm of the beaver-trade, have in vain attempted to draw them to Checontini, where they have already re-assembled several families of the same nation, and of the Montagnez, under the direction of a jesuit missionary. Some others were for uniting them with the Abenakis of St. Francis. All the answer they made to these invitations was,

\* Besides the iron mines which are pretty rich at Cap de la Madeleine, they have also some years since discovered several springs of mineral water, of the same quality with those of Forges.

that they could not think of abandoning a place where the bones of their forefathers were deposited ; but some believe, and not without grounds, that this opposition is less owing to them, than to some persons who reap advantages from their nearness to them, and who, certainly do not reflect to what a contemptible consideration they postpone the salvation of those Indians.

I have been just told, that some days hence there will be an opportunity of sending this letter to Quebec, from whence it may soon reach France by way of the Royal Island. I will fill up the remaining space with what relates to the huntings of the Indians ; that of the beaver, as I have already remarked, was not considered as a principal object, till they saw the value we set upon the spoils of this animal. Before this, the bear held the first rank with them, and here too superstition had the greatest share. The following is what is practised at this day, among those who are not Christians, in the hunting of this animal.

It is always some war-chief who fixes the time of it, and who takes care to invite the hunters. This invitation, which is made with great ceremony, is followed by a fast of ten days continuance, during which it is unlawful to taste so much as a drop of water ; and I must tell your Grace, by the way, that what the Indians call fasting, is wholly abstaining from every sort of food or drink ; nay more, in spite of the extreme weakness to which they are of necessity reduced by so severe a fast, they are always singing the live long day. The reason of this fast, is to induce the spirits to discover the place where a great number of bears may be found. Several even go a great way farther to obtain this

grace.

grace. Some have been seen to cut their flesh in several parts of the body, in order to render their genii propitious. But it is proper to know, that they never implore their succour to enable them to conquer those furious animals, but are contented with knowing where they lie. Thus Ajax did not pray to Jupiter to enable him to overcome his enemies, but only day-light enough to compleat the victory.

The Indians address their vows for the same reason to the manes of the beasts they have killed in their former huntings, and as their minds are wholly intent on such thoughts whilst they are awake, it is but natural they should often dream of bears in their sleep, which can never be very sound with such empty stomachs; but neither is this enough to determine them: it is likewise necessary, that all, or at least the greatest part of those who are to be of the party, should also see bears, and in the same canton; now how is it possible so many dreamers should agree in this point? However, provided some expert hunter dream twice or thrice an end of seeing bears in a certain fixed place, whether it be the effect of complaisance, for nothing can be more so than the Indians, or whether it is by dint of hearing the affair spoke of, their empty brains at last take the impression, every one soon falls a dreaming, or at least pretends so to do, when they determine to set out for that place. The fast ended, and the place of hunting fixed, the chief who is appointed to conduct it, gives a grand repast to all who are to be of the party, and no one dares presume to come to it, till he has first bathed, that is to say, washed himself in the river, be the weather ever so severe, provided it is not frozen. This feast, is not like many others, where they are

obliged to eat up every thing ; though they have had a long fast, and perhaps, on this very account, they observe great sobriety in eating. He who does the honours, touches nothing, and his whole employment, whilst the rest are at table, is to rehearse his ancient feats of hunting. The feast concludes with new invocations of the spirits of the departed bears. They afterwards set out on their march bedawbed with black, and equipped as if for war, amidst the acclamations of the whole village. Thus hunting is no less noble amongst these nations than war ; and the alliance of a good hunter is even more courted than that of a famous warrior, as hunting furnishes the whole family with food and raiment, beyond which the Indians never extend their care. But no one is deemed a great hunter, except he has killed twelve large beasts in one day.

These people have two great advantages over us in respect to this exercise ; for in the first place, nothing stops them, neither thickets, nor ditches, nor torrents, nor pools, nor rivers. They go always strait forwards in the directest line possible. In the second place, there are few or perhaps no animals which they will not overtake by speed of foot. Some have been seen, say they, arriving in the village driving a parcel of bears with a switch, like a flock of sheep ; and the nimblest deer is not more so than they. Besides the hunter himself reaps very little benefit by his success ; he is obliged to make large presents, and even if they prevent him by taking it at their own hand from him, he must see himself robbed without complaining, and remain satisfied with the glory of having laboured for the publick. It is, however, allowed him in the distribution of what he has caught, to begin with his own



family. But it must be acknowledged, that those with whom we have the most commerce, have already lost somewhat of this ancient generosity, and of this admirable disinterestedness. Nothing is more contagious than a selfish and interested spirit, and nothing is more capable of corrupting the morals.

The season of hunting the bear is in winter. These animals are then concealed in the hollow trunks of trees, in which if they happen to fall they make themselves a den with their roots, the entry of which they stop with pine branches, by which means they are perfectly well sheltered from all the inclemencies of the weather. If all this is still insufficient, they make a hole in the ground, taking great care to stop the mouth well when once they are entered. Some have been seen couched in the bottom of their dens, so as to be hardly perceivable, even when examined very nearly. But in whatever manner the bear is lodged, he never once quits his apartments all the winter; this is a circumstance past all manner of doubt. It is no less certain, that he lays up no manner of provision, and consequently that he must of necessity live all that while without tasting food or drink, and that as some have advanced his sole nourishment is the licking his paws; but with respect to this particular, every one is at liberty to believe as he pleases. What is certain, is, that some of them have been kept chained for a whole winter, without having the least morsel of food, or any drink given them, and at the end of six months, they have been found as fat as in the beginning. It is no doubt surprising enough, that an animal, provided of so warm a fur, and which is far from having a delicate appearance, should take more precautions against the cold than any other. This may serve to convince

us, that we ought never to form our judgment of things by appearance, and that every one is the best judge of his own wants.

There is therefore but little coursing necessary to catch the bear ; the point is only to find his burrow, and the places which they haunt. When the hunters imagine they have come near such a place, they form themselves into a large circle, a quarter of a league in circumference, more or less, according to the number of sportsmen ; they then move onwards, drawing nearer and nearer, every one trying as he advances to discover the retreat of some bear. By this means, if there are any at all in this space, they are certain of discovering them, for our Indians are excellent ferrets. Next day they go to work in the same manner, and continue so to do all the time the hunting lasts.

As soon as a bear is killed, the huntsman places his lighted pipe in his mouth, and blows the beast's throat and windpipe full of the smoke, at the same time conjuring his spirit to hold no resentment for the insult done his body, and to be propitious to him in his future huntings. But as the spirit makes no answer, the hunters to know whether his prayers have been heard, cuts off the membrane under his tongue, which he keeps till his return to the village, when every one throws his own membranes into the fire, after many invocations, and abundance of ceremony. If these happen to crackle and shrivel up, and it can hardly be otherwise, it is looked upon as a certain sign, that the manes of the bears are appeased ; if otherwise, they imagine the departed bears are wroth with them, and that next year's hunting will be unprosperous, at least till some means

means are found of reconciling them, for they have a remedy for every thing.

The hunters make good cheer whilst the hunting lasts, and, if it is ever so little successful, bring home sufficient to regale their friends, and to maintain their families a long time. To see the reception given them, the praises with which they are loaded, and their own air of self-satisfaction and applause, you would imagine them returning from some important expedition, loaden with the spoils of a conquered enemy. One must be a man indeed, say they to them, and they even speak so of themselves, thus to combat and overcome bears. Another particular, which occasions them no less eulogiums, and which adds equally to their vanity, is the circumstance of devouring all, without leaving a morsel uneaten, at a grand repast given them at their return by the person who commanded the hunting-party. The first dish served up is the largest bear that has been killed, and that too whole, and with all his entrails. He is not even so much as flead, they being satisfied with having singed off the hair as is done to a hog. This feast is sacred to I know not what genius, whose indignation they apprehend, should they leave a morsel uneaten. They must not so much as leave any of the broth in which the meat has been boiled, which is nothing but a quantity of oil, or of liquid fat. Nothing can be more execrable food, and there never happens a feast of this sort, but some one eats himself to death, and several suffer severely.

The bear is never dangerous in this country, but when he is hungry, or after being wounded. They, however, use abundance of precautions in approaching him. They seldom attack the men, on the  
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contrary, they take to flight at the first sight of one, and a dog will drive them a great way before him; if therefore they are every where such as they are in Canada, one might easily answer the question of M. Despreaux, that the bear dreads the traveller, and not the traveller the bear. The bear is in rut in the month of July; he then grows so lean, and his flesh of so sickly and disagreeable a relish, that even the Indians, who have not the most delicate stomachs, and who often eat such things as would make an European shudder, will hardly touch it. Who could imagine that an animal of this nature, and of so unlovely an appearance, should grow leaner in one month by the *belle passion*, than after an abstinence of six! It is not so surprising he should be at this season so fierce, and in so ill an humour, that it should be dangerous to meet him. This is the effect of jealousy.

This season once over, he recovers his former *embompoint*, and to which nothing more contributes, than the fruits he finds every where in the woods, and of which he is extreme greedy. He is particularly fond of grapes, and as all the forests are full of vines which rise to the tops of the highest trees, he makes no difficulty of climbing up in quest of them. But should an hunter discover him, his toothsome-ness would cost him dear. After having thus fed a good while on fruits, his flesh becomes exceedingly delicious, and continues so till the spring. It is, however, constantly attended with one very great fault, that of being too oily, so that except great moderation is used in eating it, it certainly occasions a dysentery. It is, moreover, very nourishing, and a bear's cub is at least nothing inferior to lamb.



I forgot to inform your Grace, that the Indians always carry a great number of dogs with them in their huntings; these are the only domestick animals they breed, and that too only for hunting: they appear to be all of one species, with upright ears, and a long snout like that of a wolf; they are remarkable for their fidelity to their masters, who feed them however but very ill, and never make much of them. They are very early bred to that kind of hunting for which they are intended, and excellent hunters they make. I have no more time to write you, being this moment called on to go on board.

*I am, &c.*

LETTER



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## L E T T E R VII.

*Description of the Country and Islands of Richelieu and of St. Francis. Of the Abenakis village. Of the ancient fort of Richelieu, and of such as were formerly in each parish. Shining actions of two Canadian Ladies. Of the other huntings of the Indians.*

St. Francis, March 11, 1721.

Madam,

**I** Set out on the 9th from the Three Rivers. I did no more than cross lake St. Peter, inclining towards the south. I performed this journey in a sledge, or as it is called here a cariole, the ice being still strong enough for all sorts of carriages, and I arrived towards noon at St. Francis. I employed the afternoon, and yesterday the whole day, in visiting this canton, and am now going to give you an account of what I saw.

At the extremity of Lake St. Peter is a prodigious number of islands of all sizes, called *les Isles de Richelieu*, or Richelieu Islands, and turning towards the left coming from Quebec, you find six more, which lie towards the shore of a creek of a toler-

tolerable depth, into which a pretty large river discharges itself, which takes its rise in the neighbourhood of New-York. The islands, river, and whole country bear the name of St. Francis. Each of the islands is above a quarter of a league long; their breadth is unequal; most of those of Richelieu are smaller. All were formerly full of deer, does, roebucks, and elks; game swarmed in a surprising manner, as it is still far from scarce; but the large beasts have disappeared. There are also caught excellent fish in the river St. Francis, and at its mouth. In winter they make holes in the ice, through which they let down nets five or six fathoms long, which are never drawn up empty. The fishes most commonly taken here are bars, achigans, and especially masquinongez, a sort of pikes, which have the head larger than ours, and the mouth placed under a sort of crooked snout, which gives them a singular figure. The lands of St. Francis, to judge of them by the trees they produce, and by the little which has yet been cultivated of them are very good. The planters are, however, poor enough, and several of them would be reduced to a state of indigence, did not the trade they carry on with the Indians, their neighbours, help to support them. But may not this trade, likewise, be a means of hindering them from growing rich, by rendering them lazy?

The Indians I am now speaking of, are, Abenauquies, amongst whom are some Algonquins, Sokokies, and Mahingans, better known by the name of Wolfs. This nation was formerly settled on the banks of the river Mantat, in New-York, of which country they seem to be natives. The Abenauquies came to St. Francis, from the southern shores of New France, in the neighbourhood of  
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New-England. Their first settlement, after leaving their own country to live amongst us, was on a little river which discharges itself into the St. Lawrence, almost opposite to Sillery, that is to say, about a league and a half above Quebec, on the south shore. They settled here near a fall of water, called *le Sault de la Claudiere*, or the fall of the kettle. They now live on the banks of the St. Francis, two leagues from its discharge into lake St. Peter. This spot is very delightful, which is pity, these people having no relish for the beauties of a fine situation, and the huts of Indians contributing but little to the embellishment of a prospect. This village is extremely populous, all the inhabitants of which are Christians. The nation is docile, and always much attached to the French. But the missionary has the same inquietudes on their account with him at Beckancourt, and for the same reasons.

I was regaled here with the juice of the maple; this is the season of its flowing. It is extremely delicious, has a most pleasing coolness, and is exceeding wholesome; the manner of extracting it is very simple. When the sap begins to ascend, they pierce the trunk of the tree, and by means of a bit of wood, which is inserted in it, and along which it flows, as through a pipe, the liquor is conveyed into a vessel placed under it. In order to produce an abundant flow, there must be much snow on the ground, with frosty nights, a serene sky, and the wind not too cool. Our maples might possibly have the same virtue, had we as much snow in France as there is in Canada, and were they to last as long. In proportion as the sap thickens the flow abates, and in a little time after, wholly ceases. It is easy to guess, that after such a discharge of what  
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may be called its blood, the tree should be far from being bettered: we are told, however, they will endure it for several years running. They would, perhaps, do better to let them rest for two or three years, to give them time to recover their strength. But at length, after it has been entirely drained, it is sentenced to be cut down, and is extremely proper for many uses, as well the wood as the roots and boughs. This tree must needs be very common, as great numbers of them are burnt.

The liquor of the maple is tolerably clear, tho' somewhat whitish. It is exceeding cooling and refreshing, and leaves on the palate a certain flavour of sugar, which is very agreeable. It is a great friend to the breast, and let the quantity drank be ever so great, or the party ever so much heated, it is perfectly harmless. The reason is, that it is entirely free from that crudity which occasions pleurisy, but has on the contrary a balsamick quality which sweetens the blood, and a certain salt which preserves its warmth. They add, that it never chrySTALLIZES, but that if it is kept for a certain space of time, it becomes an excellent vinegar. I do not pretend to vouch this for fact, and I know a traveller ought not slightly to adopt every thing that is told him.

It is very probable the Indians, who are perfectly well-acquainted with all the virtues of their plants, have at all times, as well as at this day, made constant use of this liquor. But it is certain, they were ignorant of the art of making a sugar from it, which we have since learnt them. They were satisfied with giving it two or three boilings, in order to thicken it a little, and to make a kind of syrup from it, which is pleasant enough. They further

ther method they use to make sugar of is to let it boil, till it takes a sufficient consistence, when it purifies of its own accord, without the mixture of any foreign ingredient. Only they must be very careful that the sugar be not over-boiled, and to skim it well. The greatest fault in this process is to let the syrup harden too much, which renders it too fat, so that it never loses a relish of honey, which renders it not so agreeable to the taste, at least till such time as it is clarified.

This sugar when made with care, which it certainly requires, is a natural pectoral, and does not burn the stomach. Besides the manufacturing, it is done at a trifling expence. It has been commonly believed, that it is impossible to refine it in the same manner with the sugar extracted from canes. I own, I see no reason to think so, and it is very certain that when it comes out of the hands of the Indians, it is purer and much better than that of the islands, which has had no more done to it. In fine, I gave some of it to a refiner of Orleans, who found no other fault to it, than that I have mentioned, and who attributed this defect wholly to its not having been left to drip long enough. He even judged it of a quality preferable to the other sort, and of this it was, he made those tablets, with which I had the honour to present your Grace, and which you were pleased to esteem so much. It may be objected, that were this of a good quality, it would have been made a branch of trade; but there is not a sufficient quantity made for this, and perhaps, they are therefore in the wrong: but there are many things besides this which are neglected in this country.

The plane-tree, the cherry-tree, the ash, and walnut-trees of several kinds, also yield a liquor from which sugar is made ; but there is a less quantity of it, and the sugar made from it, is not so good. Some, however, prefer that made from the ash, but there is very little of it made. Would your Grace have thought that there should be found in Canada what Virgil mentions, whilst he is predicting the golden age, *Et dura quercus sudabunt roscida Mella*, That honey should distil from the oak ?

This whole country has long been the scene of many a bloody battle, as, during the war with the Iroquois, it was most exposed to the incursions of those barbarians. They usually came down by way of a river, which falls into the St. Lawrence, a little above lake St. Peter, and on the same side with St. Francis, and which for this reason bore their name ; it has since gone by the name of *la Riviere de Sorel*. The islands of Richelieu which they first met with, served both for a retreat and place of ambush ; but after this pass was shut up to them by a fort, built at the mouth of the river, they came down by land both above and below, and especially made their inroads on the side of St. Francis, where they found the same conveniencies for pillaging, and where they committed cruelties horrible to relate.

Thence they spread themselves over all the colony, so that in order to defend the inhabitants from their fury, there was a necessity of building in every parish a kind of fort, where the planters and other persons might take sanctuary on the first alarm. In these there were two centinels kept night and day, and in every one of them some field-pieces, or at



least patereroes, as well to keep the enemy at a distance, as to advertise the inhabitants to be on their guard, or to give the signal for succour. These forts were no more than so many large enclosures fenced with palisadoes with some redoubts. The church and manor house of the lord were also within these places, in which there was also a space for women, children, and cattle, in case of necessity. These were sufficient to protect the people from any insult, none of them having ever, as I know, been taken by the Iroquois.

They have even seldom taken the trouble to block them up, and still more rarely to attack them with open force. The one is too dangerous an enterprize for Indians, who have no defensive arms, and who are not fond of victories bought with bloodshed. The other is altogether remote from their way of making war. There are, however, two attacks of the fort de Vercheres, which are famous in the Canadian annals, and it seems the Iroquois set their hearts here upon reducing them contrary to their custom, only to shew the valour and intrepidity of two Amazons.

In 1690, these barbarians having learnt that Madam de Vercheres was almost left alone in the fort, approached it without being discovered, and put themselves in a posture for scaling the palisado. Some musket-shot which were fired at them very seasonably, drove them to a distance; but they instantly returned: they were again repulsed, and what occasioned their utter astonishment, they could only discover a woman, whom they met wherever they went. This was Madam de Vercheres; who appeared as undismayed as if she had had a numerous garrison. The hopes of the besiegers in the

beginning of reducing with ease a place unprovided with men to defend it, made them return several times to the charge ; but the lady always repulsed them. She continued to defend herself for two days, with a valour and presence of mind which would have done honour to an old warrior ; and she at last compelled the enemy to retire, for fear of having their retreat cut off, full of shame of having been repulsed by a woman.

Two years afterwards, another party of the same nation, but much more numerous than the first, appeared in sight of the fort, whilst all the inhabitants were abroad, and generally at work in the field. The Iroquois finding them scattered in this manner and void of all distrust, seized them all one after another, and then marched towards the fort. The daughter of the lord of the land, fourteen years old, was at the distance of two hundred paces from it. At the first cry she heard, she run to get into it ; the Indians pursued her, and one of them came up with her just as she had her foot upon the threshold ; but having laid hold of her by the handkerchief she wore about her neck, she loosed it, and shut the gate on herself.

There was not a soul in the fort, besides a young soldier and a number of women, who, at the sight of their husbands, who were fast bound, and led prisoners, raised most lamentable cries ; the young lady lost neither her courage nor presence of mind. She begun with taking of her head-dress, bound up her hair, put on a hat and coat, locked up all the women, whose groans and weeping could not fail of giving new courage to the enemy. Afterwards she fixed a piece of cannon, and several musket-shot, and shewing herself with her soldier, sometime in  
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one redoubt, sometimes in another, and changing her dress from time to time, and always firing very seasonably, on seeing the Iraquoise approach the breast-work, these Indians thought there were many men in the garrison, and when the chevalier de Crisafy, informed by the firing of the cannon, appeared to succour the place, the men were already decamped.

Let us now return to our hunting; that of the elk would be no less advantagious to us at this day than that of the beaver, had our predecessors in the colony paid due attention to the profits which might have been made by it, and had they not almost entirely destroyed the whole species, at least in such places as are within our reach.

What they call here the original, is the same with the animal, which in Germany, Poland, and Russia, is called the elk, or the great beast. This animal in this country is of the size of a horse, or mule of the country of Auvergne; this has a broad crupper, the tail but a finger's length, the hough extremely high, with the feet and legs of a stag; the neck, withers, and upper part of the hough are covered with long hair; the head is above two feet long, which he stretches forward, and which gives the animal a very awkward appearance; his muzzle is thick, and bending on the upper-part, like that of a camel; and his nostrils are so wide, that one may with ease thrust half his arm into them; lastly, his antlers are full as long as those of a stag, and are much more spreading; they are branching and flat like those of a doe, and are renewed every year; but I do not know whether they receive an increase which denotes the age of the animal.

It has been pretended that the original, or elk, is subject to the epilepsy, and when he is seized with any fit, he cures himself by rubbing his ear with his left hind foot till the blood comes; a circumstance which has made his hoof be taken for a specific against the falling sickness. This is applied over the heart of the patient, which is also done for a palpitation of the heart; they place in the left hand, and rub the ear with it. But why do not they make the blood come as the elk does? This horny substance is also believed to be good in the pleurisy, in cholic pains, in fluxes, vertigoes, and purples, when pulverised and taken in water. I have heard say, that the Algonquins, who formerly fed on the flesh of this animal, were very subject to the epilepsy, and yet made no use of this remedy. They were, perhaps, acquainted with a better.

The colour of the elk's hair is a mixture of light grey, and of a dark red. It grows hollow as the beast grows older, never lies flat, nor quits its elastic force; thus it is in vain to beat it, it constantly rises again. They make matrasles and hair bottoms of it. Its flesh is of an agreeable relish, light and nourishing, and it would be great pity if it gave the falling-sickness; but our hunters, who have lived on it for several winters running, never perceived the least ill quality in it. The skin is strong, soft, and oily, is made into Chamois leather, and makes excellent buff-coats, which are also very light.

The Indians look upon the elk as an animal of good omen, and believe that those who dream of them often, may expect a long life; it is quite the contrary with the bear, except on the approach of the season for hunting those creatures. There is  
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also a very diverting tradition among the Indians of a great elk, of such a monstrous size, that the rest are like pismires in comparison of him; his legs, say they, are so long, that eight feet of snow are not the least incumbrance to him; his hide is proof against all manner of weapons, and he has a sort of arm proceeding from his shoulders, which he uses as we do ours. He is always attended by a vast number of elks which form his court, and which render him all the services he requires. Thus the antients had their Phenix and Pegasus, and the Chinese and Japanese their Kirim, their Foké, their Water-dragon, and their bird of Paradise. *Tutto 'l mondo é Paese.*

The elk is a lover of cold countries; he feeds on grass in summer, and in winter gnaws the bark of trees. When the snow is very deep, these animals assemble in some pine-wood, to shelter themselves from the severity of the weather, where they remain whilst there is any thing to live upon. This is the best season for hunting them, except when the sun has strength enough to melt the snow. For the frost forming a kind of crust on the surface in the night, the elk, who is a heavy animal, breaks it with his forked hoof, and with great difficulty extricates himself except at this time, and above all, when the snow is not deep, it is very difficult to get near him, at least, without danger, for when he is wounded he is furious, and will return boldly on the huntsman and tread him under his feet. The way to shun him is to throw him your coat, on which he will discharge all his vengeance, whilst the huntsman concealed behind some tree, is at liberty to take proper measures for dispatching him. The elk goes always at a hard trot, but such as equals the swiftest speed of the buffalo, and will hold out

a great while. But the Indians are still better cour-  
sers than he. It is affirmed that he falls down upon  
his knees to drink, eat and sleep, and that he has  
a bone in his heart, which being reduced to pow-  
der, and taken in broth, facilitates delivery, and  
softens the pains of child bearing.

The most northern nations of Canada have a  
way of hunting this animal, very simple and free  
from danger. The hunters divide into two bands,  
one embarks on board canoes, which canoes keep  
at a small distance from each other, forming a pretty  
large semicircle, the two ends of which reach the  
shore. The other body, which remains ashore,  
perform pretty much the same thing, and at first  
surround a large track of ground. Then the hunt-  
men let loose their dogs, and raise all the elks with-  
in the bounds of this semicircle, and drive them  
into the river or lake, which they no sooner enter  
than they are fired upon from all the canoes, and  
not a shot misses, so that rarely any one escapes.

Champlain mentions another way of hunting,  
not only the elk, but also the deer and caribou,  
which has some resemblance to this. They sur-  
round a space of ground with posts, interwoven  
with branches of trees, leaving a pretty narrow  
opening, where they place nets made of thongs of  
raw hides. This space is of a triangular form, and  
from the angle in which the entry is, they form ano-  
ther, but much larger triangle. Thus the two en-  
closures communicate with each other at the two an-  
gles. The two sides of the second triangle are also  
inclosed with posts, interwoven in the same man-  
ner, and the hunters drawn up in one line form  
the basis of it. They then advance, keeping the  
line entire, raising prodigious cries, and striking  
against

against something which resounds greatly. The game thus roused, and being able to escape by none of the sides, can only fly into the other enclosure, where several are taken at their first entering by the neck or horns. They make great efforts to disentangle themselves, and sometimes carry away or break the thongs. They also sometimes strangle themselves, or at least give the huntsmen time to dispatch them at leisure. Even those that escape are not a whit advanced, but find themselves enclosed in a space too narrow to be able to shun the arrows which are shot at them from all hands.

The elk has other enemies besides the Indians, and who carry on full as cruel a war against him. The most terrible of all these is the *Carcajou* or *Quincajou*, a kind of cat, with a tail so long that he twists it several times round his body, and with a skin of a brownish red. As soon as this hunter comes up with the elk, he leaps upon him, and fastens upon his neck, about which he twists his long tail, and then cuts his jugular. The elk has no means of shunning this disaster, but by flying to the water the moment he is seized by this dangerous enemy. The carcajou, who cannot endure the water, quits his hold immediately ; but, if the water happen to be at too great a distance, he will destroy the elk before he reaches it. This hunter too as he does not possess the faculty of smelling with the greatest acuteness, carries three foxes a hunting with him, which he sends on the discovery. The moment they have got scent of an elk, two of them place themselves by his side, and the third takes post behind him ; and all three manage matters so well, by harassing the prey, that they compel him to go to the place where they have left the carcajou, with whom they afterwards settle about  
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the dividing the prey. Another wile of the carcajou, in order to seize his prey is to climb upon a tree, where couched along some projecting branch, he waits till an elk passes, and leaps upon him, the moment he sees him within his reach. There are, many persons, Madam, who have taken it into their heads to imagine, that the accounts of Canada, make the Indians more terrible people than they really are. They are, however, men. But under what climate can we find brute animals, indued with so strong an instinct, and so forcibly inclined to industry, as the fox, the beaver, and the carcajou.

The stag in Canada is absolutely the same with ours in France, though, perhaps, generally somewhat bigger. It does not appear that the Indians give them much disturbance; at least, I do not find they make war upon him in form and with much preparation. It is quite different with respect to the caribou, an animal differing in nothing from the reindeer, except in the colour of its hair, which is brown a little inclining to red. This creature is not quite so tall as the elk, and has more of the ass or mule in its shape, and is at least equal in speed with the deer. Some years since, one of them was seen on Cape Diamond, above Quebec; he probably was flying before some hunters, but immediately perceived he was in no place of safety, and made scarce any more than one leap from thence into the river. A wild goat on the alps could hardly have done more. He afterwards swam cross the river with the same celerity, but was very little the better for having so done. Some Canadians who were going out against an enemy, and lay encamped at point Levi, having perceived him, watched his landing, and shot him. The  
tongue



tongue of this animal is highly esteemed, and his true country seems to be near Hudson's-Bay. The *Sieur Jeremie*, who passed several years in these northern parts, tells us, that between Danish river and Port Nelson, prodigious numbers of them were to be seen, which being driven by the gnats, and a sort of vermine called *Tons*, come to cool and refresh themselves by the sea-shore, and that for the space of forty or fifty leagues you are continually meeting herds of ten thousand in number at the least.

It appears that the *Caribou* has not multiplied greatly in the most frequented parts of Canada; but the elk was every where found in great numbers, on our first discovery of this country. And these animals were not only capable of becoming a considerable article in commerce, but also a great conveniency of life, had there been more care taken to preserve them. This is what has not been done, and whether it is that the numbers of them have been thinned, and the species in some sort diminished, or that by frightening them, they have grown wilder, and so have been obliged to retire to other parts, nothing can be more rare than to meet with any of them at present.

In the southern and western parts of New France, on both sides of the *Mississippi*, the kind of hunting most in vogue, is, that of the buffalo, which is performed in this manner. The huntsmen draw up in four lines, forming a very large square, and begin with setting the grass on fire, that being dry and very rank at this season; they afterwards advance in proportion as the fire gets ground, closing their ranks as they go. The buffaloes, which are extremely timorous of fire, always fly, till at last they

they find themselves so hemmed in, and so close to one another, that generally not a single beast escapes. It is affirmed, that no party ever returns from hunting without having killed fifteen hundred or two thousand beasts. But lest two different companies should hurt one another, they take care before they set out, to settle the time and place they intend to hunt. There are even penalties for such as transgress this regulation, as well as for those who quit their posts, and so give the buffaloes an opportunity of escaping. These pains and penalties are, that the persons transgressing may be stripped by any private person at will of every thing, and which is the greatest possible affront to an Indian, their arms not excepted, they may also throw down their cabbins. The chief is subject to this law as well as the rest, and any one who should go to rebel against it, would endanger the kindling a war, which say they would not be so easily extinguished.

The buffalo of Canada is larger than ours ; his horns are short, black, and low ; there is a great rough beard under the muzzle, and another tuft on the crown of the head, which falling over the eyes, give him a hideous aspect. He has on the back, a hunch or swelling, which begins over his haunches, encreasing always as it approaches his shoulders. The first rib forwards is a whole cubit higher than those towards the back, and is three fingers broad, and the whole rising is covered with a long reddish hair. The rest of the body is covered with a black wool, in great esteem. It is affirmed, that the fleece of a buffalo weighs eight pounds. This animal has a very broad chest, the crupper pretty thin, the tail extremely short, and scarce any neck at all ; but the head is larger than that of ours. He commonly flies as soon as he perceives any one, and  
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one dog will make a whole herd of them take to the gallop. He has a very delicate and quick scent, and in order to approach him without being perceived, near enough to shoot him, you must take care not to have the wind of him. But when he is wounded he grows furious and will turn upon the hunters. He is equally dangerous when the cow buffalo has young newly brought forth. His flesh is good, but that of the female only is eaten, that of the male being too hard and tough. As to the hide, there is none better in the known world; it is easily dressed, and though exceeding strong, becomes as supple and soft as the best shamois leather. The Indians make bucklers of it, which are very light, and which a musket-ball will hardly pierce.

There is another sort of buffalo found in the neighbourhood of Hudson's-Bay, the hide and wool of which are equally valuable with those of the sort now mentioned. The following is what the *Sieur Jeremie* says of it. "Fifteen leagues from Danes-River, you find the Sea-wolf-River, there being in fact great numbers of those animals in it. Between those two rivers, are a kind of buffaloes, called by us *Boeufs musqués*, or musk-buffaloes, from their having so strong a scent of musk, that, at a certain season, it is impossible to eat them. These animals have a very fine wool, it is longer than that of the Barbary sheep. I had some of it brought over to France in 1708, of which I caused stockings to be made for me, which were finer than silk stockings." These buffaloes, though smaller than ours, have, however, much longer and thicker horns; their roots join on the crown of their heads, and reach down by their eyes almost as low as the throat; the end afterwards bends upwards, forming a sort of crescent. Some of these are so thick,  
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that I have seen some, which after being separated from the skull weighed sixty pounds a pair. Their legs are very short, so that this wool continually trails along the ground as they walk; which renders them so deformed, that at a small distance you can hardly distinguish on which side the head stands. There is no great number of these animals, so that had the Indians been sent out to hunt them, the species had before now been entirely destroyed. Add to this, that as their legs are very short, they are killed when the snow lies deep, with lances, and are utterly incapable of escaping.

The most common animal in Canada at this day is the roe-buck, which differs in nothing from ours. He is said to shed tears when he finds himself hard pressed by the huntsmen. When young his skin is striped with different colours; afterwards this hair falls off, and other hair of the same colour with that of the rest of these animals grows up in its stead. This creature is far from being fierce, and is easily tamed; he appears to be naturally a lover of mankind. The tame female retires to the woods when she is in rut, and after she has had the male, returns to her master's house. When the time of bringing forth is come, she retires once more to the woods, where she remains some days with her young, and after that she returns to shew herself to her master; she constantly visits her young; they follow her when they think it is time, and take the fawns, which she continues to nourish in the house. It is surprising enough any of our habitations should be without whole herds of them; the Indians hunt them only occasionally.

There are also many wolves in Canada, or rather a kind of cats, for they have nothing of the wolf  
but



but a kind of howling ; in every other circumstance they are, says M. Sarrafin, *ex genere felino*, of the cat kind. These are natural hunters, living only on the animals they catch, and which they pursue to the top of the tallest trees. Their flesh is white and very good eating ; their fur and skin are both well known in France ; this is one of the finest furs in the whole country, and one of the most considerable articles in its commerce. That of a certain species of black foxes, which live in the northern mountains, is still more esteemed. I have, however heard, that the black fox of Muscovy, and of the northern parts of Europe is still more highly valued. They are, moreover, exceeding rare here, probably on account of the difficulty of catching them.

There is a more common sort, the hair of which is black or grey, mixed with white ; others of them are quite grey, and others again of a tawny red. They are found in the Upper Mississippi, of infinite beauty, and with a fur of an argentine or silver grey. We find here likewise tygers and wolves of a smaller sort than ours. The foxes hunt the water-fowl after a very ingenious manner : they advance a little into the water, and afterwards retire, playing a thousand antick tricks on the banks. The ducks, bustards, and other such birds, tickled with the sport, approach the fox ; when he sees them within reach, he keeps very quiet for a while at first, that he may not frighten them, moving only his tail, as if on purpose to draw them still nearer, and the foolish creatures are such dupes to his craftiness, as to come and peck at his tail ; the fox immediately springs upon them, and seldom misses his aim. Dogs have been bred to the  
same

same sport with tolerable success, and the same dogs carry on a fierce war against the foxes.

There is a kind of polecat, which goes by the name of *Enfant du Diable*, or the Child of the Devil; or *Bête puante*; a title derived from his ill scent, because his urine, which he lets go, when he finds himself pursued, infects the air for half a quarter of a league round; this is in other respects a very beautiful creature. He is of the size of a small cat, but thicker, the skin or fur shining, and of a greyish colour, with white lines, forming a sort of oval on the back from the neck quite to the tail. This tail is bushy like that of a fox, and turned up like a squirrel. Its fur, like that of the animal called *Pekan*, another sort of wild-cat, much of the same size with ours, and of the otter, the ordinary polecat, the *pitois*, wood-rat, ermine, and martin, are what is called *la menue pelleterie*, or lesser peltry. The ermine is of the size of our squirrel, but not quite so long; his fur is of a most beautiful white, and his tail is long, and the tip of it black as jet; our martins are not so red as those of France, and have a much finer fur. They commonly keep in the middle of woods, whence they never stir but once in two or three years, but always in large flocks. The Indians have a notion, that the year in which they leave the woods, will be good for hunting, that is, that there will be a great fall of snow. Martins skins sell actually here at a crown a piece, I mean the ordinary sort, for such as are brown go as high as four livres and upwards.

The *pitoi* differs from the polecat only in that its fur is longer, blacker, and thicker. These two animals make war on the birds, even of the largest sorts,

forts, and make great ravages amongst dove-coats and henroosts. The wood-rat is twice the size of ours; he has a bushy tail, and is of a beautiful silver grey: there are even some entirely of a most beautiful white; the female has a bag under her belly, which she opens and shuts at pleasure; in this she places her young when she is pursued, and so saves them with herself from their common enemy.

With regard to the squirrel, this animal enjoys a tolerable degree of tranquillity, so that there are a prodigious number of them in this country. They are distinguished into three different sorts; the red, which are exactly the same with ours; those called *Swisses* of a smaller size, and so called, because they have long stripes of red, white and black, much like the liveries of the pope's Swiss guards; and the flying squirrel, of much the same size with the *Swisses*, and with a dark grey fur; they are called flying squirrels, not that they really can fly, but from their leaping from tree to tree, to the distance of forty paces and more. From a higher place, they will fly or leap double the distance. What gives them this facility of leaping, is two membranes, one on each side, reaching between their fore and hind legs, and which when stretched are two inches broad; they are very thin, and covered over with a sort of cats hair or down. This little animal is easily tamed, and is very lively except when asleep, which is often the case, and he puts up wherever he can find a place, in one's sleeves, pockets, and muffs. He first pitches upon his master, whom he will distinguish amongst twenty persons.

The Canadian porcupine is of the size of a middling dog, but shorter and not so tall; his hair is about

four inches long, of the thickness of a small stalk of corn, is white, hollow, and very strong, especially upon the back ; these are his weapons, offensive and defensive. He darts them at once against any enemy who attempts his life, and if it pierce the flesh ever so little, it must be instantly drawn out, otherwise it sinks quite into it ; for this reason people are very cautious of letting their dogs come near him. His flesh is extreme good eating. A porcupine roasted is full as good as a sucking pig.

Hares and rabbits are like those of Europe, except that their hind legs are longer. Their skins are in no great request, as the hair is continually falling off ; it is pity, for their hair is exceeding fine and might be used without detriment in the hat-manufacture. They grow grey in winter, and never stir from their warrens or holes, where they live on the tenderest branches of the birch-trees. In summer they are of a carrotty red ; the fox makes a continual and a most cruel war upon them summer and winter, and the Indians take them in winter on the snow, with gins, when they go out in search of provisions.

*I have the honour to be, &c.*

LETTER



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## L E T T E R    V I I I .

*Description of the country between lake St. Peter and Montreal; in what it differs from that near Quebec. Description of the island and city of Montreal, and the country adjacent. Of the sea-cow, sea-wolf, porpoise, and whale-fishery.*

*Montreal, March 20, 1721.*

*Madam,*

**I** Set out on the 13th from St. Francis, and next day arrived in this city. In this passage, which is about twenty leagues, I had not the same pleasure as formerly of performing the same journey by water in a canoe, in the finest weather imaginable, and in viewing, as I advanced, channels and pieces of water without end, formed by a multitude of islands, which seemed at a distance part of the Continent, and to stop the river in his course, those delightful scenes which were perpetually varying like the scenes of a theatre, and which one would think had been contrived on purpose for the pleasure of travellers; I had, however, some amends made me by the singular sight of an Archipelago, become, in some sort, a Continent, and by the conveniency of taking the air in my cariole, on channels lying

between two islands, which seemed to have been planted by the hand like so many orangeries.

With respect to the prospect, it cannot be called beautiful at this season. Nothing can be more dismal than that universal whiteness, which takes place in the room of that vast variety of colours, the greatest charm of the country, than the trees which present nothing to the view, but naked tops, and whose branches are covered with icicles. Further, Madam, the lake of St. Francis is in this country, what the Loire is in France. Towards Quebec the lands are good, though generally without any thing capable of affording pleasure to the sight; in other respects, this climate is very rude; as the further you go down the river, the nearer you approach to the north, and consequently the colder it becomes. Quebec lies in 47 deg. 56 min. The Three Rivers in 46 deg. and a few minutes; and Montreal between 44 and 45; the river above lake St. Peter making and winding towards the south. One would think therefore, after passing Richelieu islands, that one were transported into another climate. The air becomes softer and more temperate, the country more level, the river more pleasant, and the banks infinitely more agreeable and delightful. You meet with islands from time to time, some of which are inhabited, and others in their natural state, which afford the sight the finest landships in the world; in a word, this is the *Touraine* and the *Limagne* of *Auvergne*, compared with the countries of *Maine* and *Normandy*.

The island of Montreal, which is, as it were the centre of this fine country, is ten leagues in length from east to west, and near four leagues in its greatest breadth; the mountain whence it derives its name,  
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and which has two summits of unequal height, is situated almost in the middle between its two extremities, and only at the distance of near half a league from the south-shore of it, on which Montreal is built. This city was first called *Ville Marie* by its founders, but this name has never obtained the sanction of custom in conversation, and holds place only in the public acts, and amongst the lords proprietaries, who are exceeding jealous of it. These lords, who are not only lords of the city, but also of the whole island, are the governors of the seminary of St. Sulpicius; and as almost all the lands on it are excellent, and well cultivated, and the city as populous as Quebec, we may venture to say, this lordship is well worth half a score the best in all Canada. This is the fruit of the industry and wisdom of the lords proprietors of this island, and it is certain, that had it been parcelled out amongst a score of proprietors, it would neither have been in the flourishing state in which we now see it, nor would the inhabitants have been near so happy.

The city of Montreal has a very pleasing aspect, and is besides conveniently situated, the streets well laid out, and the houses well built. The beauty of the country round it, and of its prospects, inspire a certain chearfulness of which every body is perfectly sensible. It is not fortified, only a simple palisado with bastions, and in a very indifferent condition, with a sorry redoubt on a small spot, which serves as a sort of outwork, and terminates in a gentle declivity, at the end of which is a small square, which is all the defence it has. This is the place you first find on your entering the city on the side of Quebec. It is not yet quite forty years since it was entirely without any fortifications, and consequently was every day exposed to the incursions of the English

and Indians, who could easily have burnt it. The Chevalier de Callieres, brother to him who was plenipotentiary at Ryswick, was he who first inclosed it, whilst he was governor of it. There has been some years since a project for walling it round \*; but it will be no easy matter to bring the inhabitants to contribute to it. They are brave, but far from rich; they have been already found very hard to be persuaded to the necessity of this expence, and are fully persuaded that their own courage is more than sufficient to defend their city against all invaders. Our Canadians in general have a good opinion of themselves in this particular, and we must acknowledge, not without good grounds. But by a natural consequence of this self-sufficiency it is much easier to sur prise than to defeat them.

Montreal is of a quadrangu'lar form, situated on the bank of the river, which rising gently, divides the city lengthwise into the upper and lower towns, though you can scarce perceive the ascent from the one to the other; the hospital, royal-magazines, and place of arms, are in the lower town, which is also the quārter in which the merchants for the most part have their houses. The seminary and parish-church, the convent of the Recollets, the jesuits, the daughters of the congregation, the governor, and most of the officers dwell in the high-town. Beyond a small stream coming from the north-west, and which terminates the city on this side, you come to a few houses and the hospital general; and turning towards the right beyond the Recollets, whose convent is at the extremity of the city, on the same side, there is a kind of suburb beginning to be built, which will in time be a very fine quarter.

\* This project has been since put in execution.



The jesuits have only a small house here, but their church, the roof of which is just upon the point of being finished is large and well built. The convent of the Recoilets is more spacious, and their community more numerous. The seminary is in the centre of the town ; they seem to have thought more of rendering it solid and commodious than magnificent ; you may, however, still discover it to be the manor-house ; it communicates with the parish church, which has much more the air of a cathedral than that of Quebec. Divine worship is celebrated here with a modesty and dignity which inspire the spectators with an awful notion of that God who is worshipped in it.

The house of the daughters of the Congregation, though one of the largest in the city, is still too small to lodge so numerous a community. This is the head of an order and the noviciate of an institute, which ought to be so much the dearer to New France, and to this city in particular, on account of its taking its rise in it ; and as the whole colony has felt the advantage of so noble an endowment. The Hotel-Dieu, or Hospital is served by these nuns, the first of whom came from la Flèche in Anjou. They are poor, which, however, neither appears in their hall, or yards, which are spacious, well-furnished, and extremely well provided with beds ; nor in their church, which is handsome, and exceeding richly ornamented ; nor in their house, which is well built, neat and commodious ; but they are at the same time ill fed, though all of them are indefatigable either in the instruction of the youth or in taking care of the sick.

The hospital-general owes its foundation to a private person called Charron, who associated with se-

veral pious persons, not only for this good work, but also to provide school-masters for the country-parishes, who should perform the same functions with respect to the boys, which the sisters of the congregation did with regard to the fair sex; but this society soon dissolved; some being called off by their private concerns, and others by their natural inconstancy, so that the *Sieur Charron* was soon left alone. He was not however discouraged, he opened his purse, and found the secret to cause several persons in power open theirs; he built a house, assembled masters and hospitallers, and men took a pleasure in aiding and empowering one who spared neither his money nor his labour, and whom no difficulties were capable of deterring. Lastly, before his death, which happened in the year 1719, he had the consolation to see his project beyond all fear of miscarrying, at least with respect to the hospital-general. The house is a fine edifice and the church a very handsome one. The school-masters are still on no solid foundations in the parishes, and the prohibition made them by the court of wearing an uniform dress, and of taking simple vows, may possibly occasion this project to be discontinued.

Between the island of *Montreal* and the Continent on the north side, is another island of about eight leagues in length, and full two in breadth where broadest. This was at first called *l'Isle de Montmagny*, after a governor-general of Canada of this name; it was afterwards granted to the jesuits, who gave it the name of *l'Isle Jesus*, which it still retains, though it has passed from them to the superiors of the seminary of *Quebec*, who have begun to plant it with inhabitants, and as the soil is

excellent, there is ground to hope it will very soon be cleared.

The channel which separates the two islands, bears the name of *the river of Meadows*, as it runs between very fine ones. its course is interrupted in the middle by a rapid current, called the Fall of the Recollet, in memory of a monk of that order drowned in it. The religious of the seminary of Montreal had, for a great while, an Indian mission in this place, which they have lately transported somewhere else.

The third arm of the river is interspersed with so prodigious a multitude of islands, that there is almost as much land as water. This channel bears the name of *Milles Isles*, or *the Thousand Islands*, or St. John's River. At the extremity of the *Isle Jesus*, is the small island *l'Isle Bizard*, from the name of a Swiss officer, whose property it was, and who died a major of Montreal. A little higher towards the south, you find the island *Perrot*, thus termed from M. Perrot, who was the first governor of Montreal, and the father of the countess de la Roche Allard, and of the lady of the president Lubert. This island is almost two leagues every way, and the soil is excellent; they are beginning to clear it. The island *Bizard* terminates the lake of the two mountains, as the island *Perrot* separates it from that of *St. Louis*.

The lake of the two mountains is properly the opening of the great river, otherwise called *la Riviere des Outaowais*, into the St. Lawrence. It is two leagues long, and almost as many broad. That of St. Louis is something larger, but is only a widening of the river St. Lawrence. Hitherto the  
French

French colony reached no further to the westward ; but they begin to make new plantations higher up the river, and the soil is every where excellent.

What has been the preservation, or at least the safety of Montreal, and all the country round it during the last wars, is two villages of Iroquois Christians, and the fort of *Chambly*. The first of these villages is that of *Sault St. Lewis*, situated on the Continent, on the south-side of the river, and three leagues above Montreal. It is very populous, and has ever been looked upon as one of our strongest barriers against the idolatrous Iroquois, and the English of New-York. It has already changed its situation twice within the space of two leagues. Its second station, when I saw it in 1708, was near a rapid stream, called *Sault St. Lewis*, which name it still retains though at a considerable distance from it. It appears to have entirely fixed at last ; for the church which they are just about to finish, and the missionaries house are each in their own kind two of the finest edifices in all Canada ; the situation of them is charming. The river which is very broad in this place is embellished with several islands, which have a very pleasant aspect. The island of Montreal is well stocked with inhabitants, forms the view on one hand, and the sight has no bounds on the other side, except lake St. Louis, which begins a little above this.

The second village bears the name of *la Montaigne*, having been for a long time situated on the double-headed mountain, which has given its name to the island. It has since been translated to the fall of the Recollet, as I have already told you ; it now stands on the Terra Firma opposite to the western extremity of the island. The ecclesiasticks of the seminary



nary of Montreal govern in it. There have many brave warriors come from these two towns, and the terror which prevailed here was admirable till the avarice of our dealers introduced drunkenness amongst them, which has made still greater savages here than in the missions of St. Francis and Becan-court.

The missionaries have in vain employed all their industry and vigilance to put a stop to the torrent of this disorder ; in vain have they made use of the aid of the secular arm, threatened them with the wrath of heaven, made use of the most persuasive arguments, all has been to no purpose, and even where it was impossible not to discover the hand of God stretched out against the authors of this evil, all have been found insufficient to bring those Christians back to a sense of their duty, who had been once blindfolded by the sordid and most contemptible passion of lucre. Even in the very streets of Montreal, are seen the most shocking spectacles, the never-failing effects of the drunkenness of these barbarians ; husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children, brothers and sisters, seizing one another by the throats, tearing of one another by the ears, and worrying one another with their teeth like so many enraged wolves. The air resounded during the night with their cries and howlings much more horrible than those with which wild beasts affright the woods.

Those, who perhaps have greatest reason to reproach themselves with these horrors, are the first to ask whether they are Christians. One might answer them, yes, they are Christians, and New Converts who know not what they do ; but those who in cold blood, and with a perfect knowledge of  
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what they are about, reduce, from sordid motives of avarice, those simple people to this condition, can they be imagined to have any religion at all? We certainly know that an Indian will give all he is worth for one glass of brandy, this is strong temptation to our dealers, against which, neither the exclamations of their pastors, nor the zeal and authority of the magistrate, nor respect for the laws, nor the severity of the divine justice, nor the dread of the judgments of the Almighty, nor the thoughts of a Hell hereafter, of which these barbarians exhibit a very striking picture, have been able to avail. But it is time to turn away our eyes from so disagreeable a speculation.

The chief part of the peltry or fur-trade, after the northern and western nations left off frequenting the city of the *Three Rivers*, was for some time carried on at Montreal, whither the Indians resorted at certain seasons from all parts of Canada. This was a kind of fair, which drew great numbers of French to this city. The governor-general and intendant came hither likewise, and made use of those occasions to settle any differences which might have happened amongst our allies. But should your Grace happen by chance to light on la Hontan's book, where he treats of this fair, I must caution you to be on your guard lest you take every thing he says of it for matter of fact. He has even forgot to give it so much as an air of probability. The women of Montreal never gave any ground for what this author lays to their charge, and there is no reason to fear for their honour with respect to the Indians. It is without example that any of them have ever taken the least liberty with any French woman, even when they have been their prisoners. They have never been subject to the least temptation by them,

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and it were to be wished, that Frenchmen had the same distaste of the Indian women. La Fontaine could not be ignorant of what is notorious to the whole country ; but he had a mind to render his account entertaining ; on which account every thing true or false was the same to him. One is always sure of pleasing some people of a certain cast, by observing no measure in the liberty one assumes of inventing, calumniating, and in our way of expressing ourselves on certain topics.

There are still now and then companies or rather flotillas of Indians arriving at Montreal, but nothing in comparison of what used to resort hither in time past. The war of the Iroquois is what has interrupted the great concourse of Indians in the colony. In order to provide against this evil, storehouses have been erected in the countries of most Indian nations, together with forts, in which there is always a governor and a garrison, strong enough to secure the merchandize in them. The Indians are above all things desirous there should be a gunsmith amongst them, and in several there are missionaries, who would generally do more good there, were there no other Frenchmen with them besides themselves. It would one would think have been proper to have restored things upon the old footing, especially as there is an universal peace and tranquillity all over the colony. This would have been a good means of restraining the *Couriers de Bois*, whose avidity, without mentioning all the disorders introduced by libertinism, which occasions a thousand meanesses, which render us contemptible to the barbarians, has lowered the price of our commodities, and raised that of their peltry. Besides that, the Indians, who are by nature haughty, have grown insolent

lent since they have seen themselves courted by us.

The fishery is much more likely and proper to enrich Canada than the fur-trade ; which is also entirely independent of the Indians. There are two reasons for applying to this, which, however, have not been able to induce our planters to make it the principal object of their commerce. I have nothing to add, to what I have already had the honour to tell you with respect to the cod-fishery, which is alone worth more than a Peru, had the founders of New France taken proper measures to secure the possession of it to us. I begin with that of the sea-wolf, sea-cow, and porpoise, which may be carried on over all the gulf of St. Lawrence, and even a great way up that river.

The sea-wolf owes its name to its cry, which is a sort of howling, for as to its figure it has nothing of the wolf, nor of any known land animal. Lescarbot affirms, that he has heard some of them, whose cry resembled that of a screech-owl ; but this might possibly have been the cry of young ones, whose voice was not as yet arrived at its full tone. Moreover, Madam, they never hesitate in this country to place the sea-wolf in the rank of fishes, tho' it is far from being dumb, is brought forth on shore, on which it lives at least as much as in the water, is covered with hair, in a word, though nothing is wanting to it, which constitutes an animal truly amphibious. But we are now in a new world, and it must not be expected we should always speak the language of the old, and as custom, the authority of which is never disputed, has put it in possession of all its own rights. Thus the war which is carried on against the sea-wolf, though often on shore,  
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and with muskets, is called a fishery; and that carried on against the beaver, though in the water, and with nets, is called hunting.

The head of the sea-wolf resembles pretty much that of a dog; he has four very short legs, especially the hind legs; in every other circumstance he is entirely a fish: he rather crawls than walks on his legs; those before are armed with nails, the hind being shaped like fins; his skin is hard, and is covered with a short hair of various colours. There are some entirely white, as they are all when first brought forth; some grow black, and others red, as they grow older, and others again of both colours together.

The fishermen distinguish several sorts of sea-wolves; the largest weigh two thousand weight, and it is pretended have sharper snouts than the rest. There are some of them which flounce only in water; our sailors call them *brasseurs*, as they call another sort *nau*, of which I neither know the origin nor meaning. Another sort are called *Grosses têtes*, *Thick-heads*. Some of their young are very alert, and dextrous in breaking the nets spread for them; these are of a greyish colour, are very game-some, full of mettle, and as handsome as an animal of this figure can be; the Indians accustom them to follow them like little dogs, and eat them nevertheless.

M. Denis mentions two sorts of sea-wolves, which he found on the coasts of Acadia; one of them, says he, are so very large, that their young ones are bigger than our largest hogs. He adds, that a little while after they are brought forth, the parents lead them to the water, and from time to time  
conduct

conduct them back on shore to suckle them; that this fishery is carried on in the month of February, when the young ones, which they are not desirous of catching, scarce ever go to the water; thus on the first alarm the old ones take to flight, making a prodigious noise to advertise their young, that they ought to follow them, which summons they never fail to obey, provided the fishermen do not quickly stop them by a knock on the snout with a stick, which is sufficient to kill them. The number of these animals upon that coast must needs be prodigious; if it is true, what the same author assures us, that eight hundred of these young ones have been taken in one day.

The second sort mentioned by M. Denys are very small, one of them yielding only a quantity of oil sufficient to fill its own bladder. These last never go to any distance from the sea-shore, and have always one of their number upon duty by way of sentry. At the first signal he gives, they all plunge into the sea; some time after they approach the land, and raise themselves on their hind legs, to see whether there is any danger; but in spite of all their precautions great numbers of them are surprized on shore, it being scarce possible to catch them any other way.

It is by all agreed, that the flesh of the sea-wolf is good eating, but it turns much better to account to make oil of it, which is no very difficult operation. They melt the blubber fat of it over the fire which dissolves into an oil. Oftentimes they content themselves with erecting what they call *charniers*, a name given to large squares of boards or plank, on which is spread the flesh of a number of sea-wolves; here it melts of itself, and the oil runs  
through

through a hole contrived for the purpose. This oil when fresh is good for the use of the kitchen, but that of the young ones soon grows rank; and that of the others if kept for any considerable time, becomes too dry. In this case it is made use of to burn, or in currying of leather. It keeps long clear, has no smell, sediment, or impurity whatsoever at the bottom of the cask.

In the infancy of the colony great numbers of the hides of sea-wolves were made use of for muffs. This fashion has long been laid aside, so that the general use they are now put to, is the covering of trunks and chests. When tanned, they have almost the same grain with Morocco leather; they are not quite so fine, but are less liable to crack, and keep longer quite fresh, and look as if new. Very good shoes and boots have been made of them, which let in no water. They also cover seats with them, and the wood wears out before the leather; they tan these hides here with the bark of the oak, and in the dye stuff with which they use black, is mixed a powder made from a certain stone found on the banks of rivers. This is called thunder-stone, or marcasite of the mines.

The sea-wolves couple and bring forth their young on rocks, and sometimes on the ice; their common litter is two, which they often suckle in the water, but oftener on shore; when they would teach them to swim they carry them, say they, on their backs, then throw them off in the water, afterwards taking them up again, and continue this sort of instruction till the young ones are able to swim alone. If this is true, it is an odd sort of fish, and which nature seems not to have instructed in what most sort of land animals do the moment

they are brought forth. The sea-wolf has very acute senses, which are his sole means of defence; he is, however, often surprized in spite of all his vigilance, as I have already taken notice; but the most common way of catching them is the following.

It is the custom of this animal to enter the creeks with the tide; when the fishermen have found out such creeks to which great numbers of sea-wolves resort, they enclose them with stakes and nets, leaving only a small opening for the sea-wolves to enter; as soon as it is high-water they shut this opening, so that when the tide goes out the fishes remain a dry, and are easily dispatched. They also follow them in canoes to the places to which many of them resort, and fire upon them when they raise their heads above water to breathe. If they happen to be no more than wounded they are easily taken; but if killed outright, they immediately sink to the bottom, like the beavers; but they have large dogs bred to this exercise, which fetch them from the bottom in seven or eight fathom water. Lastly, I have been told, that a sailor having one day surprized a vast herd of them ashore, drove them before him to his lodgings with a switch, as he would have done a flock of sheep, and that he with his comrades killed to the number of nine hundred of them. *Sit fides penes autorem.*

Our fishermen now take very few sea-cows, on the coasts of the gulf of St. Lawrence; and I do not certainly know whether any of them have ever been caught any where else. The English formerly set up a fishery of this sort on the island *de Sable*, but without any degree of success. The figure of this animal is not very different from that of the  
 sea-



sea-wolf, but it is larger. What is peculiar to it is two teeth of the thickness and length of a man's arm, bending somewhat upwards, which one might easily mistake for horns, and from which these animals probably had the name of sea-cows. The sailors have a simpler name for them, which is, the beast with the great tooth. This tooth is a very fine ivory, as well as all the rest in the jaws of this fish, and which are four fingers long.

There are two sorts of porpoises in the river St. Lawrence; those found in salt-water, that is, from a little below the Isle of Orleans, are exactly the same with those found in the ocean. Those in fresh water are perfectly white, and of the size of a cow; the first sort commonly go in herds; I have not observed this circumstance in the other sort, though I have seen many of them playing in the port of Quebec. They never go higher than this city; but there are many of them on the coasts of Acadia, as well as of the first sort, so that the difference of colour cannot proceed from the different qualities of fresh and salt-water.

The white porpoise yields a hog'shead of oil; which is of much the same quality with that drawn from the sea-wolf. I have never found any person that had tasted the flesh of this animal, but as for those called dorcelles, a name given the grey porpoise, their flesh is said to be no bad eating; they make puddings and sausages of their guts; the pluck is excellent fricafied, and the head preferable to that of a sheep, though inferior to a calf's.

The skins of both are tanned and dressed like Morocco-leather; at first it is as tender as lard or fat, and is an inch thick; they shave it down thin-

ner for a considerable while, till it becomes a transparent skin ; and let it be made ever so thin, even so as to be fit for making into waistcoats and breeches, it is always excessive strong and musket-proof. There are of them eighteen feet long and nine broad ; it is affirmed that there is nothing exceeds it for covering coaches.

There have been two porpoise fisheries lately set up below Quebec, one in the bay of St. Paul, and the other seven or eight leagues lower down, opposite to a habitation called *Camourasca*, from certain rocks, rising to a considerable height above water. The expence is no great affair, and the profits would be considerable, were the porpoises animals haunting particular parts ; but whether from instinct or caprice, they always find means to break all the measures of the fishermen, and to take a different rout from that where they are expected. Besides these fisheries, which only enrich particular persons, occasion a general outcry among the people, which is owing to their having caused a considerable diminution in the fishery for eels, an article of great benefit to the poor. For the porpoises finding themselves disturbed below Quebec, have retired elsewhere, and the eels no longer finding those large fishes in their way, swim down the river without any hindrance ; from whence it is, that between Quebec and the Three Rivers, where prodigious quantities of them were caught formerly, there are now none caught at all.

The way of fishing for the porpoise is little different from that I last mentioned with respect to the sea-wolf : when the tide is out, they plant pretty near each other in the mud or sand stakes to which they tie nets in the form of a pouch the opening  
of

of which is tolerably large ; but that in such manner, that when the fish has once passed through it, he cannot find his way out again ; there are green branches placed at top of the flakes. When the flood comes, these fishes which give chase to the herrings, which always make towards the shore, and are allured by the verdure which they are extremely fond of, and intangled in the nets, where they are kept prisoners. In proportion as the tide ebbs, you have the pleasure of seeing their confusion and fruitless struggles to escape. In a word, they remain a dry, and sometimes heaped upon one another in such numbers, that with one stroke of a stick you may knock down two or three of them. It is affirmed, that amongst the white fort some have been found to weigh three thousand weight.

No body is ignorant of the manner of carrying on the whale-fishery, for which reason I shall take no notice of it ; it is here said, that the Basques or people of Bayonne in France, have left it over, only that they might give themselves up entirely to the fur-trade, which requires neither so large an expence, nor so much fatigue, and whereof the profits were then more considerable as well as sooner returned. But they wanted many conveniencies for carrying it on, which are to be had now, there being so many settlements a great way towards the gulf. There has some years since been an attempt to re-establish it, but without success ; the undertakers either wanted the necessary funds for making the advances, or else wanted to reimburse the sums they had laid out too soon, or wanted constancy. It appears, however, that this commerce might become highly useful to the colony, and that it might be carried on with much inferior expence and danger than on the coast of Greenland. What should

hinder it even from being fixed and carried on from shore, as M. Denys proposed to carry on the cod-fishery in Acadia. This is, Madam, what I have to say with regard to the fisheries of Canada: I will inform you of some others, after I shall have taken notice of their manner of living in this country.

*I have the honour to be, &c.*

LETTER



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## L E T T E R IX.

*Of fort Chambly, with the fishes, birds, and several animals peculiar to Canada. Of trees common to it with France, and of such as are peculiar to this country.*

*Chambly, April 11, 1721.*

*Madam,*

ONE of the principal securities and bulwarks of Montreal against the Iroquois and New-York, is the fort of Chambly, from which I now have the honour to write you. I came here to pay a visit to the commandant, who is M. de *Sabrevois*, one of the best families of Beauce, and my friend, fellow-passenger, and a good officer. I am going in two words to give you the situation and description of this important place.

In the first years of our settling in this country, the Iroquois, that they might make incursions even as far as the center of our plantations, came down a river which empties itself into the St. Lawrence, a little above St. Peter, and which had for this reason given it the name of *the River of the Iroquois*. It has been since called *Richelieu River*, on account

of a fort of this name, that had been built at its mouth. This fort having been demolished, M. de Sorel, captain in the regiment of Carignan Salieres, caused build another, to which his name was given; this name has been since extended to the river, which still retains it, though the fort has long ceased to exist. After sailing up this river about seventeen leagues, always stretching towards the south, and a little towards to the south-west, you come to a *rapide*, and opposite to it, a little lake formed by the same river. On the banks of this *rapide*, and opposite to the lake, the fort is placed. This was at first built of wood by M. de Chambly, captain in the above-mentioned regiment, and at the time when M. de Sorel built the other. But it has since been built of stone, and flanked with four bastions, and has always a strong garrison. The lands round it are excellent, they begin to make plantations, and many are of opinion that in time a city will be built here.

From Chambly to lake Champlain there are only eight leagues; the river Sorel crosses this lake, and there is not perhaps a canton in all New France, which it would be more proper to people. The climate here is milder than in any part of the colony, and the inhabitants will have for neighbours, the Iroquois, who are, at bottom, a good sort of people enough, who will, probably, never think of coming to a rupture with us, after they shall see us in such a condition as not to fear them, and who, in my opinion would like us much better for neighbours than the people of New-York. There are many other reasons to induce us to make this settlement; but were I to mention all, I should leave myself nothing to tell you when I have the honour to see you. I am going to make use of the leisure

I have here to continue my account of such things as are peculiar to this country. I left off at the article of the benefit which the gulph and river of St. Lawrence are capable of furnishing with respect to the commerce of New France. It remains to treat of the resources the inhabitants may find for the support of life in these parts.

In all parts where the water of the river is salt, that is from cape *Tourmente* to the gulf, may be caught such fishes as are found in the ocean; such as the salmon, tunny, shad fish, smelt, sea-eels, mackerel, trout, lamprey, sole, herring, anchovy, pilchard, turbot, and many others, unknown in Europe. They are all caught with nets of different forms. In the gulph are caught thrashers, three sorts of *Rayes*; the common, that called *Bouclée*, and which is by some preferred to ours in France; and the sort termed *le Posteau*, not esteemed; lencornets, a kind of cuttle-fish; *Gobergues*, or St. Peter-fish; plaise, requiems, sea-dogs, another sort of requiem not so mischievous when alive, and better beyond comparison when dead. Oysters are extremely plenty in winter, on all the coasts of Acadia, and their way of fishing them is very singular. They make a hole in the ice, through which they put two poles tied together, so as to play like pincers, and rarely draw them up without an oyster.

I said the lencornet was a kind of cuttle-fish, its figure is, however, very different from the common sort of them. It is quite round, or rather oval; it has above the tail, a sort of border, which serves it instead of a target, and its head is surrounded with prickles half a foot long, which he uses to catch other fishes; there are two sorts of them which differ only in size; some are as large as

a hogthead, and others but a foot long ; they catch only these last, and that with a torch ; they are very fond of light, they hold it out to them from the shore at high-water, and they come to it, and so are left a-ground. The lencornet roasted, boiled, or fricassied, is excellent eating ; but it makes the sauce quite black.

The gobergue resembles a small cod. It has the same taste, and is dried like it. It has two black spots on each side the head, and the sailors tell you that this is the fish in which St. Peter found money to pay the Roman emperor's tribute for our Lord and himself, and that these two spots are the two places by which he held it ; this is the reason it has got the name of St. Peter's fish. The sea-plaise has firmer flesh and is of a better relish than the fresh water sort ; this is taken as well as the lobster or sea-crab, with long poles armed with a pointed iron, ending in a fork or hook which hinders the fish from getting loose. Lastly, in several places, especially in Acadia, the pools are full of salmon trouts a foot long, and of turtles two foot diameter, the flesh of which is excellent, and the upper shell, striped with white, red, and blue.

Amongst the fishes which lake Champlain, and the rivers falling into it, abound, M. Champlain remarks one singular enough, called *Chaourasou* ; probably from the name given it by the Indians. This is a species of the armed fish, which is found in several other places ; this is in figure pretty much like a pike, only it is covered with scales which are proof against a dagger ; its colour is a silver grey, and from under its throat proceeds a bone which is flat, indented, hollow, and pierced or open at the end, from which it is probable the animal  
breathes



breathes through this. The skin which covers this bone is tender, and its length is in proportion to that of the fish, of which it is one third part. Its breadth is two fingers in those of the smallest size. The Indians assured M. Champlain they had found some of those fishes from eight to ten feet broad; but the largest of those he saw were not above five, and were as thick as a man's thigh.

We may well imagine this to be a real pirate amongst the inhabitants of the waters; but no body could ever dream that he is full as dangerous an enemy to the citizens of the air; this is, however, one of his trades, in which he acts like an able hunter; the way he does it is as follows. He conceals himself amongst the canes or reeds, in such manner, that nothing is to be seen, besides his weapon, which he holds raised perpendicularly above the surface of the water. The fowl which come to take rest imagining this weapon to be only a withered reed, make no scruple of perching upon it. They are no sooner alighted than the fish opens his throat, and so suddenly makes at his prey, that it rarely escapes him. The teeth which are placed on the sides of the bone, which he uses so dexterously, are pretty long and very sharp. The Indians pretend they are a sovereign remedy against the tooth-ach, and that by pricking the part most affected with one of these teeth the pain vanishes that instant.

These people have a wonderful address in darting fishes under water, especially in rapid currents. They also fish with the bosom net, and prepare themselves for it by a ceremony singular enough. Before they use this net they marry it to two girls  
who

who are virgins, and during the marriage-feast, place it between the two brides; they afterwards exhort it to catch plenty of fish, and believe they do a great deal to obtain this favour, by making large presents to the sham fathers-in-law.

The sturgeon of this country is both a fresh and salt-water fish; for it is caught on the coasts of Canada, and in the great lakes cross which the river St. Lawrence runs. Many believe this to be the true dolphin of the antients; if this is true, it was but fit the king of fishes should reign both in the rivers and ocean. Be this as it will, we see here sturgeons of from eight to ten, and twelve feet long, and of a proportionable thickness. This animal has on its head a sort of crown about an inch high, and is covered with scales half a foot diameter, almost oval, and with small figures on them, pretty much like the lily in the arms of France. The following is the way the Indians fish for them in the lakes. Two men place themselves in the two extremities of a canoe; the next the stern steers, the other standing up holding a dart to which is tied a long cord, the other extremity whereof is fastened to one of the cross timbers of the canoe. The moment he sees the sturgeon within reach of him, he lances his dart at him, and endeavours, as much as possible, to hit in the place that is without scales. If the fish happens to be wounded, he flies and draws the canoe after him with extreme velocity; but after he has swam the distance of an hundred and fifty paces or thereabouts, he dies, and then, they draw up the line and take him. There is a small sort of sturgeon, the flesh of which is exceeding tender, and prodigious delicate.

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The river St. Lawrence breeds several fishes, altogether unknown in France. Those most esteemed are the *Achigau* and the *Gilt-head*. The other rivers of Canada, and especially those of Acadia, are equally well provided with this river, perhaps, the most plentifully stocked with fish in the whole world, and in which there is the greatest variety of different and those the best sorts.

There are some seasons in which the fishes in this river are alone capable of sustaining the whole colony. But I am utterly at a loss, what degree of credit ought to be given to what I have read in a manuscript relation of an ancient missionary, who asserts, his having seen a *Homme marin*, or mermaid in the river Sorel, three leagues below Chambly; this relation is wrote with abundance of judgment; but in order to state the matter of fact, and to prove that he has not been deceived by a false and hasty appearance, the author ought to have added to his account a description of this monster. People have often at first look apprehended they saw the appearance of something, which vanishes on the careful scrutiny of a sage eye. Besides, had this fish so resembling a human creature come from the sea, he must have made a long voyage before he got up as high as near Chambly, and it must have been extraordinary enough he was never seen till he arrived at this fortress.

The forests of Canada are far from being as well peopled with birds, as our lakes and rivers are with fishes. There are some, however, which are not without their merit, and which are even peculiar to the Americans. We find here eagles of two sorts; the largest have the head and neck almost quite white; they give chase to the hares and rabbits, take  
them

them in their talons, and carry them to their nests and airies. The rest are entirely grey, and only make war on birds. They are all excellent fishers. The falcon, the goshawk, and tassel, are absolutely the same with those of Europe; but we have here a second sort of them, which live solely by fishing.

Our partridges are of three sorts; the grey, red, and black partridge. The last are the least esteemed; they savour too much of the grape, juniper, and fir-tree. They have the head and eyes of a pheasant, and their flesh is brown; they have all long tails, which they spread like a fan, or like the tail of a turkey-cock. These tails are exceeding beautiful; some of them are a mixture of grey, red, and brown; others are that of a light and dark brown. I said the black partridge was not esteemed; some there are, however, who prefer them even to the red sort; they are all bigger than ours in France, but so stupidly foolish as to suffer themselves to be shot, and even to let you come near them, almost without stirring.

Besides snipes which are excellent in this country, and small water-game, which is every where in great plenty, you meet with some woodcocks about spring, but those in no great numbers. In the country of the Illinois, and all over the southern parts of New France, they are more common. M. Denys asserts, that the raven of Canada is as good eating as a pullet. This may be true on the coasts of Acadia; but I don't find people of this opinion in these parts; they are larger than in France, something blacker, and have a different cry from ours. The osprey, on the contrary is smaller, and their cry not so disagreeable. The owl of Canada has no diffe-



difference from that of France, but a small ring of white round the neck, and a particular kind of cry. Its flesh is good eating, and many prefer it to that of a pullet. In winter, its provisions are field mice, the legs of which he breaks, feeds carefully, and fattens till he wants them. The bat here is larger than that of France. The blackbird and swallow are in this country birds of passage, as in Europe; the former are not a deep black, but inclining to red. We have three sorts of larks the smallest of which are like sparrows. This last is little different from ours; he has quite the same inclinations, but his mien is very indifferent.

There are in this country vast multitudes of wild-ducks, of which I have heard reckoned to the number of two and twenty different species. The most beautiful and the most delicate eating are those called *Canards Branchus*, or bough wild ducks, from their perching on the boughs of trees. Their plumage is extremely variegated, and very brilliant. Swans, turkey-cocks, water-hens, cranes, teale, geese, bustards, and other large water-fowl, swarm every where, except near our habitations, which they never approach. We have cranes of two colours; some quite white, and others of a light grey. They all make excellent soup. Our woodpecker is an animal of extreme beauty; there are some of all manner of colours, and others quite black, or of a dark brown all over the body, except the head and neck, which are of a beautiful red.

The thrush of Canada is much the same with that of France as to shape, but has only one half his musick; the wren has robbed him of the other half. The goldfinch has the head less beautiful than that of France, and its plumage is a mixture of  
 8 black

black and yellow. As I have never seen any of them in a cage, I can say nothing of his song. All our woods are full of a bird of the size of a linnet, which is quite yellow, and has a delightful pipe; his song, however, is but short, and without variety. This has no name to distinguish it, but that of its colour. A sort of ortolan, the plumage of which is of an ash-colour on the back, and white under the belly, and which is called the *white-bird*, is, of all the guests in our forests the best songster. This yields not to the nightingale of France, but the male only is overheard to sing; the female which is of a deeper colour, utters not a single note even in a cage; this small animal is of a very beautiful mien; and well deserves the name of ortolan for its flavour. I know not whither he bends his course in the winter; but he is always the first to return, and to proclaim the approach of the spring. The snow is scarce melted in some parts, when they flock thither in great numbers, and then you may take as many of them as you please.

You must travel a hundred leagues to the southward of this place before you meet with any of the birds called cardinals. There are some in Paris which have been brought thither from Louisiana, and I think they might thrive in France, could they breed like the canary bird; the sweetness of their song, the brilliancy of their plumage, which is of a shining scarlet incarnate; the little tuft on their heads, and which is no bad resemblance of the crowns the painters give to Indian and American kings, seem to promise them the empire of the airy tribe; they have, however, a rival in this country, who would even have the unanimous voice of every one, were his pipe as grateful to the ear as his outward appearance is to the sight; this is  
what

what is called in this country *l'Oiseau Mouche*, or the Fly-bird.

This name has two derivations ; the first is that of the smallness of the animal ; for with all its plumage, its volume is no larger than that of an ordinary May-bug. The second is a loud sort of humming noise, which he makes with his wings, and which is not unlike that of a large fly ; its legs which are about an inch long are like two needles ; his bill is of the same thickness, and from it he sends forth a small sting, with which he pierces the flowers, in order to extract the sap, which is his nourishment. The female has nothing striking in her appearance, is of a tolerable agreeable white under the belly, and of a bright grey all over the rest of the body ; but the male is a perfect jewel ; he has on the crown of his head a small tuft of the most beautiful black, the breast red, the belly white, the back, wings, and tail of a green, like that of the leaves of the rose-bush ; specks of gold, scattered all over the plumage, add a prodigious *eclat* to it, and an imperceptible down produces on it the most delightful shadings that can possibly be seen.

Some travellers have confounded this bird with the *Coliby* ; and in fact, this bird seems to be a species of it. But the coliby of the islands is something bigger, has not so much liveliness of colour in his plumage, and his bill is a little bent downwards. I might, however, be mistaken with regard to the brightness and lustre of his plumage, as I never saw any of them alive : some affirm he has a melodious pipe ; if this is true, he has a great advantage over the oiseau mouche, which no one

has as yet ever heard to sing ; but I myself have heard a female one whistle notes exceeding shrill and disagreeable. This bird has an extremely strong and an amazingly rapid flight ; you behold him on some flower, and in a moment he will dart upwards into the air almost perpendicularly ; it is an enemy to the raven, and a dangerous one too. I have heard a man worthy of credit affirm, that he has seen one boldly quit a flower he was sucking, lance himself upwards into the air like lightning, get under the wing of a raven that lay motionless on his extended wings at a vast height, pierce it with his stinging, and make him tumble down dead, either of his fall or the wound he had received.

The oiseau mouche selects such flowers as are of the strongest scent, and sucks them, always hopping about at the same time ; he, however, alights now and then to rest himself when we have an opportunity of beholding him at our leisure. Some of them have been kept for some time, by feeding them with sugar-water and flowers ; I formerly kept one of them for twenty-four hours ; he suffered himself to be taken and handled, and counterfeited himself dead ; the moment I let him go, he flew away, and continued fluttering about my window. I made a present of him to a friend, who found him dead the next morning, and that very night there was a little frost. Thus these diminutive animals are extremely watchful to prevent the first advent of cold weather.

There is great reason to think, that they retire to Carolina, where we are assured they are never seen but in winter ; they make their nests in Canada, where they suspend them on the branch of some



tree, and turn them towards such an exposure, that they are sheltered from all the injuries of the air and weather. Nothing can be neater than these nests. The foundation consists of tiny bits of wood interwoven basket-wise, and the inside is lined with I don't know what sort of down, which seems to be silk; their eggs are of the size of a pea, with yellow spots on a black ground. Their common litter is said to be three and sometimes five.

Amongst the reptiles of this country, I know of none as yet but the rattle snake, that merits the least attention. There are some of them as thick as a man's leg, and sometimes thicker, and long in proportion; but there are others, and those I believe the greater number, which are neither longer nor thicker than our largest snakes of France; their figure is abundantly odd; on a neck, which is flat and very broad, they have but a small head. Their colour is lively without being dazzling, and a pale yellow, with very beautiful shades, is the colour which predominates.

But the most remarkable part of this animal is its tail; this is scaly like a coat of mail, somewhat flattish, and it grows, say they, every year a row of scales; thus its age may be known by its tail; as that of a horse is by his teeth; when he stirs he makes the same noise with his tail as the grasshopper does when he leaps or flies; for your Grace, no doubt knows, that the pretended musick of the grasshopper is no more than the noise of his wings. Moreover, the resemblance I speak of is so perfect, that I have been deceived with it myself. It is from this noise, this sort of serpent has obtained the name it bears.

Its bite is mortal, if the remedy be not applied immediately, but Providence has provided against this misfortune. In all places where this dangerous reptile is found, there grows an herb, called the rattle-snake plant, *Herbe a serpent a sonettes*, the root of which is a never-failing antidote against the venom of this animal. You have only to bray or chew it, and to apply it in the nature of a plaister upon the wound. This plant is beautiful and easily known. Its stem is round, and somewhat thicker than a goose quill, rises to the height of three or four feet, and terminates in a yellow flower of the figure and size of a single daisy; this flower has a very sweet scent, the leaves of the plant are oval, narrow, sustained, five and five, in form of a turkey cock's foot, by a pedicle, or foot-stalk an inch long.

The rattle-snake rarely attacks any passenger who gives him no provocation. I had one just at my foot, which was certainly more afraid than I was, for I did not perceive him till he was flying. But should you tread on him you are sure to be bitten, and if you pursue him, if he has ever so little time to recover himself, he folds himself up in a circle with his head in the middle, and darts himself with great force against his enemy. The Indians, however, give chase to him, and esteem his flesh excellent. I have even heard Frenchmen, who had eaten of it, say, that it was no bad eating; but they were travellers, a sort of cattle who hold every thing excellent, being often exposed to be extreme hungry. It is, however, for certain, abundantly innocent food.

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I don't know, Madam, whither I ought to entertain you with an account of the forests of Canada. We are here surrounded with the vastest woods in the whole world; in all appearance, they are as ancient as the world itself, and were never planted by the hand of man. Nothing can present a nobler or more magnificent prospect to the eyes, the trees hide their tops in the clouds, and the variety of different species of them is so prodigious, that even amongst all those who have most applied themselves to the knowledge of them, there is not perhaps one who is not ignorant of at least one half of them. As to their quality, and the uses to which they may be applied, their sentiments are so different, both in the country in which we now are, as well as in that where your grace is, that I despair of being ever able to give you the information I could desire on this head. At present, at least I ought to confine myself to some observations on what I have myself seen, and on what I have heard people who have more experience say, and who are greater adepts in this science.

What most struck my eyes on my first arrival in this country, was, the pines, fir-trees, and cedars, which are of a height and thickness perfectly astonishing. There are two sorts of pines in this country, all of them yielding a resinous substance very fit for making pitch and tar. The white pines, at least some of them, shoot out at the upper extremity a kind of mushroom, which the inhabitants call *Guarigûe*, and which the Indians use with success against disorders in the breast and in the dysentery. The red pines are more gummy and heavier, but do not grow to such a thickness. The lands which produce both are not the most proper for



for bearing of corn ; they are generally a mixture of gravel, sand, and clay.

There are four sorts of fir-trees in Canada ; the first resembles ours ; the three others are the *Epinette Blanche*, and *Epinette Rouge*, or the White and Red Prickly firs, and that called *la Perusse*. The second and fourth sorts rise to a vast height, and are excellent for masts, especially the white prickly sort, which are also extremely fit for carpenter's work. This grows generally in moist, and black lands, but which after being drained, are fit for bearing all sorts of grain. Its bark is smooth and shining, and there grows on it a kind of small blisters of the size of kidney-beans, which contain a kind of turpentine, which is sovereign in wounds, which it cures speedily, and even in fractures. We are assured that it cures fevers, and pains in the breast and stomach ; the way to use it is to put two drops of it in some broth. This is what is called in Paris *White Balsam*.

The *epinette rouge* has scarce any resemblance to the *epinette blanche*. Its wood is heavy, and may be of good use in ship-building, and in carpenter's work. The lands where it grows are a mixture of gravel and clay. The *perusse* is gummy, but yields not a quantity sufficient to be made use of ; its wood remains long in the ground without rotting, which renders it extremely fit for paling or inclosures. The bark is excellent for tanners, and the Indians make a dye of it, resembling that of a turky-blue. Most of the lands where this tree grows are clayey ; I have, however, seen some very thick ones in sandy-grounds, though perhaps there was clay under the sand.

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The cedar is of two sorts, the white and the red ; the former are the thickest of the two ; of these are made palings, and this too is the wood most commonly made use of for shingles, on account of its lightness. There distills a sort of incense from it, but it is without any fruit like those of Mount Libanus. The red cedar is shorter and thinner in proportion. The most sensible difference between them, is, that all the odour of the former is in the leaves, and that of the second in its wood ; but the latter is the more agreeable flavour. The cedar, at least the white sort grows only in good ground.

There are all over Canada two sorts of oaks, distinguished by the names of the white and red oaks. The first are often found in lands which are low, swampy, fertile, and proper for producing corn and legumes. The red, the wood of which is the least esteemed, grow in dry sandy lands, both of them bear acorns. The maple is likewise very common in Canada, is very large and is made into good furniture ; this grows on high grounds, and such as are fit for bearing fruit-trees, which they call *Rbene*. Here is the female maple, the wood of which is streaked and clouded very much, but is paler than the male ; besides it has all its qualities as well as its colour ; but it must have a moist and rich soil.

The cherry-tree, which is found promiscuously amongst the maple and white wood-trees, is very fit for making furniture ; it yields a much greater quantity of juice than the maple, but this is bitter and the sugar made of it never loses this quality. The Indians use its bark against certain diseases,

which are incident to women. There are in Canada, three sorts of ash-trees; the free, the mongrel, and the bastard. The first grows among maples is fit for carpenter's work, and for staves for dry ware casks. The second has the same qualities, and like the bastard, will grow only in low and good lands.

They reckon also in this country three sorts of walnut trees, the hard, the soft, and a third sort which has a very thin bark. The hard sort bears a very small walnut, good to eat, but very costive. The wood is only fit for fire-wood. The tender, bears a long fruit, as large as those in France, but the shell is very hard. The kernels of them are excellent. The wood is not so pretty as ours; but to make amends it is almost incorruptible in water, or in the ground, and is difficult to consume in the fire. The third produces a nut of the same size with the first, but in greater quantity, and which is bitter, and inclosed in a very tender husk; they make excellent oil of it. This tree yields a sweeter sap than that of the maple, but in a small quantity. This grows only, as doth the soft walnut tree, in the best lands.

The beech is here so plentiful, that whole tracts are covered with them; I have seen them growing on sandy hills, and in exceeding fertile low lands. They bear great quantities of nuts, from which it would be an easy matter to extract an oil. The bears make this their principal nourishment, as do also the partridges. The wood of it is exceeding tender, and very fit for oars and for shallops. But those of canoes are made of maple. The tree called white-wood, which grows amongst maples, and  
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the cherry-tree is exceeding plentiful. These trees grow to a great thickness and very strait; very good planks and boards may be made of them, and even staves for dry ware casks. It is soft and easily worked; the Indians peel off the bark of this tree to cover their cabins.

Elms are very plenty all over this country. There are white and red elms; the wood of this tree is difficult to work but lasts longest. The bark of the red elm is that of which the Iroquois make their canoes. Some of them which are made of one single piece, will contain twenty persons; some of them are likewise hollow, and to these the bears and wild cats retire in the month of November, and remain till April. The poplar grows commonly on the banks of rivers and on the seashore.

In the thickest woods are found great numbers of prune or plumb-trees, loaden with a very sour fruit. The vinage-tree is a very pithy shrub, which produces a sour clustering fruit, of the colour of bullock's blood; they cause infuse it in water, and make a sort of vinegar of it. The *Pemime*, is another shrub growing along rivulets, and in meadows; it bears also a clustering fruit yielding a red and very astringent liquor. There are three sorts of gooseberry-trees in this country; these are the same with those of France. The *Bluet* grows here as in Europe in woods. This fruit is a sovereign and speedy cure for the dysentery. The Indians dry them as we do cherries in France.

The *Atoca* is a stone-fruit of the size of a cherry. This plant which creeps along the ground in swamps,  
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produces its fruit in water; this fruit is sharp, and is made into a confection. The white-thorn is found along rivulets, and produces a quantity of fruit with a treble kernel; this is the food of several wild beasts. What they call here the cotton-tree, is a plant which sprouts like asparagus, to the height of about three feet, and at the end grow several tufts of flowers. In the morning before the dew has fallen off, they shake the flowers, and there falls from it, with the humidity, a kind of honey, which by boiling is reduced to a kind of sugar. The seed is formed in a sort of pod, which contains a kind of very fine cotton.

The *soleil* is another very common plant in the fields of the Indians, and which rises to the height of seven or eight feet. Its flower, which is very thick has much the same figure with that of the marigold, and the seed is disposed in the same manner; the Indians extract an oil from it by boiling, with which they anoint their hair. The legumes they cultivate most, are, Maize, or Turkey-corn, French-beans, gourds, and melons. They have a sort of gourds smaller than ours, and which taste much of sugar; they boil them whole in water, or roast them under the ashes, and so eat them without any other preparation.

The Indians were acquainted before our arrival in their country with the common and water melon. The former are as good as those in France, especially in this island, where they are in great plenty. The hop-plant and capilaire are likewise the natural produce of Canada; but the latter grows to a much greater height, and is infinitely better than in France. I now finish a letter, by  
which



which you may easily discover a traveller, rambling over the forests and plains of Canada, and who is diverted with every thing which presents itself to his view. But what could you expect from one who travels through such a country as this is.

*I am, &c.*

LETTER



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# L E T T E R X.

*Of the causes of the excessive cold in Canada. Of the resources it affords for the support of life. The character of the French Canadians.*

*Montreal, April 22d, 1721.*

*Madam,*

**I**T is surprising, that in France, where they so often meet with persons who have spent great part of their lives in Canada, they should have so imperfect a notion of the country. This undoubtedly proceeds from this, that the greatest number of those, to whom they apply for information, are acquainted only with its bad side. The winter commonly begins before the vessels set sail in order to return to France, and always in such a manner as to astonish every one except the natives of the place. The first frosts in a few days fill the rivers with ice, and the earth is soon covered with snow, which continues for six months, and is always six feet deep in places not exposed to the wind.

It is true there is no want of wood to guard against the cold, which very soon becomes extreme, and encroaches greatly on the spring : but it is, however, something extremely shocking, not to be able

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to stir out of doors without being frozen, at least, without being wrapt up in furs like a bear. Moreover, what a spectacle is it to behold one continued tract of snow, which pains the sight, and hides from your view all the beauties of nature? No more difference between the rivers and fields, no more variety, even the trees are covered with snow-frost, with large icicles depending from all their branches, under which you cannot pass with safety. What can a man think who sees the horses with beards of ice more than a foot long, and who can travel in a country, where, for the space of six months, the bears themselves dare not shew their faces to the weather? Thus I have never passed a winter in this country without seeing some one or other carried to the hospital, and who was obliged to have his legs or arms cut off on account of their being benumbed and frozen. In a word, if the sky is clear, the wind which blows from the west is intolerably piercing. If it turns to the south or east, the weather becomes a little more moderate, but so thick a snow falls, that there is no seeing ten paces before you, even at noon-day. On the other hand, if a compleat thaw comes on, farewell to the yearly stock of capons, quarters of beef and mutton, poultry and fish, which they had laid up in granaries, depending on the continuance of the frost; so that in spite of the excessive severity of the cold, people are reduced to the necessity of wishing for its continuance.

It is in vain to say that the winters are not now as severe as they were four and twenty years ago, and that in all probability they will become still milder in the sequel: the sufferings of those who have gone before us, and the happiness of such as may come after us, are no remedies against a present evil, under



der which we ourselves labour. What comfort would it have been to a Creole of Martinico, who had arrived in France for the first time during the hard frost in 1709, should I, who had just then returned from Quebec, have told him that the cold he now felt was still inferior to that of Canada? I should however have told him truth, and could have supported it by good evidences; but he might very well have answered me, that he found the cold in France not a whit the less piercing, by being informed it was still more so in Canada.

But as soon as the month of May begins, we have reason to change our language, the mildness of this latter part of the spring being by so much the more agreeable, as it succeeds so rigorous a season. The heat of the summer, which in less than four months, shews us both the seed and the crop\*, the serenity of autumn, during which there is a series of fine weather, very seldom to be seen, in the greatest part of the provinces of France: all which, joined to the liberty which is enjoyed in this country, makes many find their stay here as agreeable as in the kingdom where they were born, and it is certain that our Canadians would without hesitation give it the preference.

After all, these colds so long and so severe, are attended with inconveniencies which can never thoroughly be remedied. I reckon in the first place the difficulty of feeding the cattle, which during the

\* The ground is tilled in Autumn, and the seed sown between the middle of April and the tenth of May. The crop is cut down between the 15th of August and 20th of September. The lands which are not tilled till the Spring yield smaller crops, because the nitrous particles of the snow are not so well able to penetrate into them.

whole winter season can find nothing in the fields, and consequently the preserving them must be extremely expensive, while their flesh, after being kept six months on dry food, must have lost almost all its relish. Corn is also necessary for the poultry, and great care must be taken to keep them alive during so long a time. If to avoid expence all those beasts are killed about the end of October, which are intended for consumption before the month of May, you may easily judge how insipid this sort of victuals must be; and from the manner in which they catch fish through the ice, it appears this cannot be very plentiful, besides its being frozen from the very first, so that it is almost impossible to have it fresh in the season when it is most wanted. Were it not for the cod-fish and eels there would hardly be any such thing as keeping Lent; with respect to butter and fresh eggs there can be no question, nor indeed is much more account to be made of garden-stuff, which is kept as well as may be in the cellars, but loses almost all its virtue after it has been there for some months.

Add to this, that excepting apples, which are of an excellent quality, and small summer fruit which does not keep, the fruits natural to France have not as yet succeeded in Canada. These, Madam, are all the disadvantages occasioned by this excessive cold season. We are, notwithstanding, as near the sun as in the most southern provinces of France, and the farther you advance into the colony, you still approach the nearer to it. Whence then can arise this difference of temperatures under the same parallels of latitude? This is a question, which in my opinion no one has as yet answered in a satisfactory manner.

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Most authors who have handled this matter are contented with saying that this long and severe cold is occasioned by the snow lying so long on the ground, that it is not possible it can ever be thoroughly warmed, especially in places under cover : But this answer removes the difficulty only one step ; for it may be asked what produces this great quantity of snow in climates as warm as Languedoc and Provence, and in countries at a much greater distance from the mountains.

The *Sieur Denys*, whom I have already quoted oftner than once, affirms that the trees resume their verdure before the sun is sufficiently elevated above the horizon to melt the snow or warm the earth ; this may be true in Acadia, and over all the sea coast, but it is certain that every where else the snow is melted in the thickest forests before there is a single leaf upon the trees. This author seems to have no better authority for saying that the snow melts rather by the heat of the earth than that of the air, and that it always begins to melt from below : but will he persuade any man that the earth when covered with frozen water, is warmer than the air which immediately receives the rays of the sun. Besides, this is no answer to the question about the cause of that deluge of snow which overwhelms this immense country situated in the middle of the temperate zone.

There is no question but that generally speaking the mountains, forests, and lakes contribute greatly to it, but it appears to me that we ought to seek out for other causes besides. Father Joseph Bretani, an Italian Jesuit, who spent the best part of his lifetime in Canada, has left behind him in his own language, an account of New France, wherein he en-

deavours to clear up this point of natural philosophy. He will not allow that the cold, the causes of which we are enquiring into, ought to be attributed to any of those just mentioned, but methinks he goes too far ; for no reply can be made to experience, which convinces us of the decrease of the cold, according as the country is cleared, tho' that may not happen in the proportion it ought, were the thicknes of the woods its principal cause.

He himself confesses that it is no rare thing to see a frosty night succeed a very hot summer day ; but this way of reasoning appears to me to furnish an argument against himself ; for how can this phœnomenon be explained otherwise than by saying that the sun having opened the pores of the earth in the day time, the humidity which was still contained in it, the nitrous particles which the snow had left behind it in quantities, and the heat which an air equally subtle with that in this country still preserves after sun-set, all together form these gentle frosts in the same manner as we make ice upon the fire. Besides, the humidity of the earth has evidently a large share in the excessive colds of this climate ; but whence could this humidity proceed in a country, the soil of which has for the most a great mixture of sand in it, if it was not from the number and extent of its lakes and rivers, the thicknes of its forests, its mountains covered with snow, which as it melts overflows the plains, and the winds which carry the exhalations every where along with them.

But should Father Bretani be mistaken, as I believe he is, when he excludes all those from being the causes of the excessive cold in Canada, yet what he substitutes in their room seems, in my opinion,  
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to contribute greatly to it. There are, says he, humid soils in the warmest climates, and very dry soils in the coldest; but a certain mixture of wet and dry forms ice and snow, the quantity of which determines the degree and duration of cold. Now, whoever has travelled ever so little in Canada must be sensible that this mixture obtains there in a very remarkable manner. There is undoubtedly no country in the world which abounds more with water, and there are few which have a greater mixture of stones and sand. With all this it rains very seldom, and the air is extremely pure and wholesome, an evident proof of the natural dryness of the soil. In effect, Father Bretani tells us, that during the sixteen years he was employed as missionary in the country of the Hurons, there were there at the same time to the number of sixty French, several of whom were of a very delicate complexion, all of them had been very ill fed, and had besides endured hardships beyond what could be imagined, and yet that not one of that number had died.

It is true, this prodigious number of rivers and lakes, which take up as much space in new France as one half the continent of Europe, ought to furnish the air with a continual supply of fresh vapours, but besides that the greatest part of these waters are extremely clear, and upon a sandy bottom, their great and continual agitation by blunting the efficacy of the sun's rays, prevents vapours from being exhaled in great quantities, or soon causes them to fall again in mists. For the winds raise as frequent and violent tempests upon these fresh-water seas as upon the ocean, which is likewise the true reason why it rains so seldom at sea.

The second cause of the extreme cold of Canada, according to father Bretani, is the neighbourhood of the North Sea, covered with enormous islands of ice for more than eight months of the year, there, Madam, you may call to mind what I told you in my second letter, of the cold we felt even in the dog-days, from the neighbourhood of one of these islands of ice, or rather from the wind which blew upon us from that side on which it lay, and which ceased that moment it fell to the leeward of us. It is, besides, certain that it never snows here but with a north-east wind, which blows from that quarter in which the northern ice lyes; and tho' the cold is not so very piercing when the snow falls, yet it cannot be doubted that it greatly contributes to render the west and north-west winds so extremely sharp, which before they reach us blow over immense countries, and a great chain of mountains entirely covered with it.

Lastly, if we believe the Italian missionary, the height of the land is not the least cause of the subtilty of the air of this country, and consequently of the severity of its cold. Father Bretani endeavours to prove this height of the land from the depth of the sea, which encreases according to him in proportion as you approach Canada, and from the number and height of the falls so frequent in the rivers. But in my opinion the depth of the sea absolutely proves nothing, and the falls of St. Lawrence and some other rivers in New France, no more than the cataracts of the Nile. Moreover, it is not observed that, from Montreal where the falls commence to the sea, the river St. Lawrence is much more rapid than some of our rivers in Europe. I am therefore of opinion that we must confine our reasoning to the ices of the north; and that  
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even notwithstanding this, if Canada were as well cleared and as populous as France, the winters would become much shorter and less severe. They would not however be always so mild as in France, on account of the serenity and pureness of the air; for it is certain that in the winter season every thing else being equal, the frost is always sharper when the sky is clear, and the sun has rarified the air.

After winter is past, fishing and hunting supply those who will take the trouble with provisions in abundance; besides the fish and the game which I have already spoken of, the river St. Lawrence and the forests furnish the inhabitants with two articles, which are a great resource to them. From Quebec as high as Trois Rivieres, a prodigious quantity of large eels are caught in the river, which eels come down from Lake Ontario, where they are bred in the marshes on the north side of the Lake, and meeting, as I have already observed, with the white porpoises which give them chase, the greatest part endeavour to return back, which is the reason of their being taken in such numbers. This fishery is carried on in the following manner.

Thro' that whole extent of ground, which is covered at high water, but left dry during the ebb, boxes are set at convenient distances, which are supported by a pallisade of osier hurdles, contrived in such a manner that no free passage is left for the eels. Large casting nets of the same materials and structure are fixed by the narrowest end in these boxes, while the other extremity, which is very wide, is backed against the hurdles, upon which green branches are placed at intervals. When all is covered by the tide, the eels which love to be near the banks, and are attracted by the verdure, gather

in great numbers along the pallisade, go in to the nets, which lead them into the prisons prepared for them, so that all the boxes are often filled in the space of one tide.

These eels are larger than ours, and yield a great deal of oil. I have already observed that with whatever sauce they are dressed, they still retain a disagreeable relish, to which people cannot easily accustom themselves. This perhaps is the fault of our cooks. All their bones terminate in a point somewhat crooked, which I do not remember to have seen in those of France. The best method of preparing this fish, is to hang them up in a chimney, and suffer them to fry slowly in their skins, which come off of themselves, and all the oil runs out. As great quantities of them are taken during the time this fishery lasts, they are salted and barreled up like herrings.

The other article I mentioned, is a sort of wood-pigeon, which used to come hither in the months of May and June, as was said, in such numbers as to darken the air, but the case is different at present. Nevertheless, a very great number still come to rest themselves upon the trees, even in the neighbourhood of the towns. They are commonly called turtles, and differ from the wood and other pigeons in Europe, sufficiently to constitute a fourth species. They are smaller than our largest pigeons, and have the same eyes and changing shadows upon their necks. Their plumage is a dark brown, excepting their wings, in which there are some feathers of a very fine blue.

These birds may be said to seek only an opportunity of being killed, for if there is a naked branch upon



upon a tree, on that they chuse to perch, and sit in such a manner, that the most inexperienced gunner can hardly fail of bringing down at least half a dozen at a single shot. Means have likewise been found of catching many of them alive; they are fed till the first setting in of the frosts, then killed, and thrown into the store-room, where they are preserved all the winter.

Thus it appears, Madam, that every one here is possessed of the necessaries of life; but there is little paid to the King; the inhabitant is not acquainted with taxes; bread is cheap; fish and flesh are not dear; but wine, stuffs, and all French commodities are very expensive. Gentlemen, and those officers who have nothing but their pay, and are besides encumbered with families, have the greatest reason to complain. The women have a great deal of spirit and good nature, are extremely agreeable, and excellent breeders; and these good qualities are for the most part all the fortune they bring their husbands; but God has blessed the marriages in this country in the same manner he formerly blessed those of the Patriarchs. In order to support such numerous families, they ought likewise to lead the lives of Patriarchs, but the time for this is past. There are a greater number of noblesse in New France than in all the other colonies put together.

The king maintains here eight and twenty companies of marines, and three *etats majors*. Many families have been ennobled here, and there still remain several officers of the regiment of Corignan-Salieres, who have peopled this country with gentlemen who are not in extraordinary good circumstances, and would be still less so, were not commerce

allowed them, and the right of hunting and fishing, which is common to every one.

After all, it is a little their own fault if they are ever exposed to want; the land is good almost every where, and agriculture does not in the least derogate from their quality. How many gentlemen throughout all our provinces would envy the lot of the simple inhabitants of Canada, did they but know it? And can those who languish here in a shameful indigence, be excused for refusing to embrace a profession, which the corruption of manners and the most salutary maxims has alone degraded from its ancient dignity? There is not in the world a more wholesome climate than this; no particular distemper is epidemical here, the fields and woods are full of simples of a wonderful efficacy, and the trees distill balms of an excellent quality. These advantages ought at least to engage those whose birth providence has cast in this country to remain in it; but inconstancy, aversion to a regular and assiduous labour, and a spirit of independence, have ever carried a great many young people out of it, and prevented the colony from being peopled.

These, Madam, are the defects with which the French Canadians are, with the greatest justice, reproached. The same may likewise be said of the Indians. One would imagine that the air they breathe in this immense continent contributes to it; but the example and frequent intercourse with its natural inhabitants are more than sufficient to constitute this character. Our Creoles are likewise accused of great avidity in amassing, and indeed they do things with this view, which could hardly be believed if they were not seen. The journeys they undertake; the fatigues they undergo; the dangers to  
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which they expose themselves, and the efforts they make, surpass all imagination. There are however few less interested, who dissipate with greater facility what has cost them so much pains to acquire, or who testify less regret at having lost it. Thus there is some room to imagine that they commonly undertake such painful and dangerous journeys out of a taste they have contracted for them. They love to breathe a free air, they are early accustomed to a wandering life; it has charms for them, which make them forget past dangers and fatigues, and they place their glory in encountering them often. They have a great deal of wit, especially the fair sex, in whom it is brilliant and easy; they are, besides, constant and resolute, fertile in resources, courageous, and capable of managing the greatest affairs. You, Madam, are acquainted with more than one of this character, and have often declared your surprise at it to me. I can assure you such are frequent in this country, and are to be found in all ranks and conditions of life.

I know not whether I ought to reckon amongst the defects of our Canadians the good opinion they entertain of themselves. It is at least certain that it inspires them with a confidence, which leads them to undertake and execute what would appear impossible to many others. It must however be confessed they have excellent qualities. There is not a province in the kingdom where the people have a finer complexion, a more advantageous stature, or a body better proportioned. The strength of their constitution is not always answerable, and if the Canadians live to any age, they soon look old and decrepid. This is not entirely their own fault, it is likewise that of their parents, who are not sufficiently watchful over their children to prevent their ruining  
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their health at a time of life, when if it suffers it is seldom or never recovered. Their agility and address are unequalled ; the most expert Indians themselves are not better marksmen, or manage their canoes in the most dangerous *rapids* with greater skill.

Many are of opinion that they are unfit for the sciences, which require any great degree of application, and a continued study. I am not able to say whether this prejudice is well founded, for as yet we have seen no Canadian who has endeavoured to remove it, which is perhaps owing to the dissipation in which they are brought up. But nobody can deny them an excellent genius for mechanics ; they have hardly any occasion for the assistance of a master in order to excel in this science ; and some are every day to be met with who have succeeded in all trades, without ever having served an apprenticeship.

Some people tax them with ingratitude, nevertheless they seem to me to have a pretty good disposition ; but their natural inconstancy often prevents their attending to the duties required by gratitude. It is alledged they make bad servants, which is owing to their great haughtiness of spirit, and to their loving liberty too much to subject themselves willingly to servitude. They are however good masters, which is the reverse of what is said of those from whom the greatest part of them are descended. They would have been perfect in character, if to their own virtues they had added those of their ancestors. Their inconstancy in friendship has sometimes been complained of ; but this complaint can hardly be general, and in those who have given occasion for it, it proceeds from their not being accustomed to constraint, even in their own affairs. If  
they



they are not easily disciplin'd, this likewise proceeds from the same principle, or from their having a discipline peculiar to themselves, which they believe is better adapted for carrying on war against the Indians, in which they are not entirely to blame. Moreover, they appear to me to be unable to govern a certain impetuosity, which renders them fitter for sudden surprises or hasty expeditions, than the regular and continued operations of a campaign. It has likewise been observed, that amongst a great number of brave men who distinguished themselves in the last wars, there were very few found capable of bearing a superior. This is perhaps owing to their not having sufficiently learned to obey. It is however true, that when they are well conducted, there is nothing which they will not accomplish, whether by sea or land, but in order to this they must entertain a great opinion of their commander. The late M. d' Iberville, who had all the good qualities of his countrymen without any of their defects, could have led them to the end of the world.

There is one thing with respect to which they are not easily to be excused, and that is the little natural affection most of them shew to their parents, who for their part display a tenderness for them, which is not extremely well managed. The Indians fall into the same defect, and it produces amongst them the same consequences. But what above all things ought to make the Canadians be held in much esteem, is the great fund they have of piety and religion, and that nothing is wanting to their education upon this article. It is likewise true, that when they are out of their own country they hardly retain any of their defects. As with all this they are extremely brave and active, they might be of great service in war, in the marine and in the arts ;  
and

and I am opinion that it would redound greatly to the advantage of the state, were they to be much more numerous than they are at present. Men constitute the principal riches of the Sovereign, and Canada, should it be of no other use to France, would still be, were it well peopled, one of the most important of all our colonies.

*I am, &c.*

LETTER

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## L E T T E R    XI.

*Of the Iroquoise village of the Fall of St. Lewis. Of the different nations inhabiting Canada.*

*Fall of St. Lewis, May 1, 1721.*

*Madam,*

**I** Came hither to spend a part of the Easter holidays ; this is a time of devotion, and in this village every thing inspires one with sentiments of piety. All the exercises of religion are carried on in a very edifying manner, and we still feel the impression which the fervor of the first inhabitants has left behind it ; for it is certain, that this for a long time was the only place in Canada, where you could perceive the great examples of those heroick virtues with which God has been used to enrich his churches when in their infancy ; and the manner in which it has been erected is something very extraordinary.

The missionaries after having for a long time watered the Iroquoise cantons with the sweat of their brows, and some of them even with their blood, were at last sensible that it was impracticable to establish the christian religion amongst them upon a solid foundation ; but they still had hopes of reducing a

considerable number of these Indians under the yoke of the faith. They perceived that God had an elect few among these barbarians as in every nation ; but they were persuaded, that *to make their calling and election sure*, they must separate from their brethren ; and therefore came to a resolution to settle all those who were disposed to embrace Christianity in a colony by themselves. They made known their design to the governor-general and intendant, who carrying their views still farther, highly approved it, being sensible that this settlement would be greatly advantageous to New France, as it has indeed been, as well as another similar to it, which has since been set on foot in the island of Montreal, under the name of *la Montagne*, of which the superiors of the seminary of St. Sulpicius have always had the direction.

To return to this which has served as a model for the other, one of the Iroquois missionaries communicated his design to some *Aquiers* ; they relished his proposal, and this settlement was formed chiefly out of that canton, which had at all times been the most averse to the ministers of the gospel, and had even treated them the most cruelly. Thus to the great astonishment of the French and Indians, those formidable enemies to God and our nation were touched with that victorious grace, which takes delight in triumphing over the hardest and most rebellious hearts, abandoning every thing that was dearest to them, that they might have no impediment in serving the Lord with all liberty. A sacrifice still more glorious for Indians, than for any other nation, because there are none so much attached as they are to their families and their native country.

Their



Their numbers encreased greatly in a short time, and this progress was, in a great measure, owing to the zeal of the first converts who composed this chosen flock. In the very height of a war, and even with the hazard of their lives they have travelled over all the cantons, in order to make proselytes, and when they have fallen into the hands of their enemies, who were often their nearest relations, reckoned themselves happy when dying in the midst of the most frightful torments, as having exposed themselves to them, solely for the glory of God and the salvation of their brethren. Such were the sentiments even of the murderers of the ministers of Jesus Christ, and perhaps this oracle of St. Paul, Ep. Rom. c. 20. *Ubi autem abundavit delictum, superabundavit Gratia*, was never so literally accomplished as now. It was most commonly left to their choice, either to renounce Jesus Christ and return to their canton, or to suffer the most cruel death, and there was not an example of one who accepted life upon that condition. Some have even perished worn out with miseries in the prisons of New-York, when they could have had their liberty on changing their belief, or engaging not to live among the French, which they imagined they could not do without running the risque of losing their faith.

Those converts, who on such occasions displayed so much fidelity and greatness of soul, must undoubtedly have been prepared for it by the purest virtue; we cannot in reality call in question certain facts, which have been notorious over the whole colony, and which render those very credible for which we have only the evidence of the Indians themselves and their pastors. M. de St. Valier, who is head of this church to this day, wrote as follows in the  
year

year 1688. “ The lives of all the Christians of this mission are very extraordinary, and the whole village would be taken for a monastery. As they have quitted the allurements of their native country, entirely to make sure of their salvation, they are all led to the practice of the most perfect resignation, and they preserve amongst them such excellent rules for their sanctification that nothing can be added to them.”

This village was at first placed in the meadow *de la Madeleire*, about a league lower than the Fall of St. Lewis on the south-side. But the soil being found improper for the culture of maiz, it was transported to a place opposite to the Fall itself, from whence it has taken the name it still bears, though it has been carried from thence a few years ago a league higher up. I have already observed, that its situation is charming, that the church, and the house of the missionaries, are two of the finest edifices in this country, which makes me imagine, that they have taken such good measures as not to be obliged to make a new transmigration.

On my arrival here, I had laid my account with departing immediately after the festivals ; but nothing is more subject to disappointments of all kinds than this manner of travelling. I am, therefore, still uncertain as to the day of my departure ; and as in such voyages as mine, advantage is to be taken of every occurrence, I shall now make the best use I can of this present delay. I have spent my time in the company of some old missionaries, who have lived a long time among the Indians, and I shall now, Madam, give you an account of what I have heard from them concerning the different nations inhabiting this immense continent.

The

The first land of America which is discovered on a voyage from France to Canada is Newfoundland, one of the largest islands we are acquainted with. It has never yet been fully determined, whether its inhabitants are natives of the country; and its barrenness, were it really as great as it is supposed to be, would be no sufficient proof that they are not; for hunting and fishing afford sufficient subsistence for Indians. What is certain is, that none but Eskimaux have ever been seen upon it, who are not originally of this island. Their real native country is the land of *Laborador*, or *Labrador*, it is there, at least, they pass the greatest part of the year; for, in my opinion, it would be profaning the grateful appellation of a native country, to apply it to wandering barbarians who have no affection for any country, and who being scarce able to people two or three villages, yet occupy an immense extent of land. In effect, besides the coasts of Newfoundland, which the Eskimaux wander over in the summer-time, there are none but that people to be seen throughout all that vast continent lying betwixt the river St. Lawrence, Canada, and the North-sea. Some of them have been even found at a great distance from hence up the river Bourbon, which runs from the westward, and falls into Hudson's-Bay.

The origin of their name is not certain, but it is probably derived from the Abenauise word *Esquimantris*, which signifies an eater of raw flesh. The Eskimaux are in fact the only savages we know of who eat raw flesh, though they are likewise in use to broil or dry it in the sun. It is likewise certain, that there is no nation known in America, which answers better to the first idea Europeans are apt to conceive of savages. They are almost the only nation amongst whom the men have beards, which



grow up to their eyes, and are so thick, that it is with difficulty the features of their faces are to be distinguished. They have likewise something very frightful in their air and mien, small fiery eyes, large and very ugly teeth, hair commonly black, sometimes fair, always very much in disorder, and their whole external appearance extremely brutish. Their manners and character do not bely the deformity of their physiognomy; they are fierce, savage, suspicious, turbulent, and have a constant propensity to do mischief to strangers, who ought to be perpetually on their guard against them. As to the qualities of their mind we have had so little intercourse with this nation that we do not as yet know their real temper; but they have always had a sufficient bent towards mischief.

They have been frequently known to go in the night-time, and cut the cables of ships at anchor, in order to make them drive on shore, and then plunder the wrecks; they are not afraid to attack them even in open day on discovering their crews to be weak. It has never been possible to tame them, and it is not safe to hold any discourse with them but at the end of a long pole. They not only refuse to come near the Europeans, but they will not so much as eat any thing they present to them; and in all things take so many precautions on their side, which mark an extreme distrust, that they must mutually inspire the same with respect to every thing which comes from them. They are of an advantageous stature, and are tolerably well made. Their skin is as white as ours, which proceeds undoubtedly from their never going naked even in the warmest weather.

Their



Their beards, their fair hair, the whiteness of their skin, and the little resemblance and intercourse they have with their nearest neighbours leave no room to doubt of their having a different original from the rest of the Americans; but the opinion of their being descended from the Basques seems to me to have little foundation, if it is true, as I am informed it is, that the languages of the two nations have no affinity with one another. This alliance at any rate can be of no honour to any nation; for if there is not on the surface of the earth a region less fit to be inhabited than Newfoundland and Labrador, so there is not, perhaps, a people which deserves better to be confined to it than the Eskimaux. For my part, I am of opinion, that they are originally from Greenland.

These savages are covered in such a manner that only a part of their faces and the ends of their hands are to be seen. Over a sort of a shirt made of bladders, or the intestines of fish cut into fillets, and neatly enough sewed together, they throw a kind of a surtout made of bear-skin, or of the skin of some other wild beast, nay, sometimes of the skins of birds, whilst their head is covered with a cowl of the same stuff, with the shirt fixed to it; on the top of which is a tuft of hair, which hangs down and shades their forehead. The shirt falls no lower than their loins, the surtout hangs down behind to their thighs, and terminates before in a point somewhat lower than their girdle; but in the women it descends on both sides as far as the mid-leg, where it is fixed by a girdle, at which hang little bones. The men wear breeches made of skins, with the hairy side inwards, and faced on the outside with ermine, and such like furs. They likewise wear on their feet pumps of skins, the

hairy side of which is also inwards; and above them furred boots of the same, and over these a second pair of pumps, then another pair of boots over that. It is affirmed they are sometimes shod in this manner three or four times over, which, however, does not prevent these Indians from being extremely active. Their arrows, the only weapons they use, are pointed with the teeth of the sea-cow, to which they likewise add iron when they can get it. In the summer they live in the open air, night and day, but in the winter under ground, in a sort of caverns, where they lie pell-mell one above another.

We are but little acquainted with the other nations living beyond Hudson's-bay, and in its neighbourhood. In the southern parts of this bay, the trade is carried on with the Matassins, the Monsonis, the Christinaux, and Assiniboils; these last must come from a great distance as they inhabit the borders of a lake to the north or north-west of the Sioux, and likewise speak a dialect of their language. The three others speak the Algonquin tongue. The Christinaux or Killistinons, come from the northward of Lake Superior. The Indians in the neighbourhood of the river Bourbon\*, and the river St. Theresa, have no affinity in their language either with the one or the other. Perhaps, they may be better understood amongst the Eskimaux, who have been seen, as is said, a great way above the mouth of this river. It has been observed that

\* It is said that a hundred leagues from the mouth of this river, it is unnavigable for fifty more, but that a passage is found by means of rivers and lakes which fall into it, and that afterwards it runs through the middle of a very fine country, which continues as far as the Lake of the Assiniboils, from whence it takes its rise.

they are extremely superstitious, and use some kind of sacrifices. Those who have had the greatest intercourse with them, assure us, that in common with the Indians of Canada, they have a notion of a good and of an evil genius, that the Sun is their great divinity, and that when they deliberate upon any affair of importance, they make him an offering of smoke which is done in the following manner. At break of day they assemble in the cabin of one of their chiefs, who, after having lighted his pipe, presents it three times to the rising sun, and then turning it with both his hands from the east to the west, he supplicates this luminary to be propitious to his people. This being done, all those who compose the assembly, smoke in the same pipe. All these Indians, though of four or five different nations are known in the French accounts under the general name of the *Savans*, because the country they inhabit is low, marshy, and ill-wooded, and in Canada, all those wet lands, which are good for nothing are called *Savannahs*.

Coasting along the north-shore of the Bay, you meet with two rivers, the first of which is called *Danish-River*, and the second the river of the *Sea-Wolf*; on the banks of both these rivers there are Indians, who, I know not why, have got the name, or rather nickname of *Plats côtez de Chiens*, or Flat-sided Dogs, and are often at war with the *Savans*; but neither of them treat their prisoners with that barbarity which is usual among the Canadians, being contented with keeping them in slavery. Want sometimes reduces the *Savans* to strange extremities; and whether it be idleness on their part, or that their lands are absolutely good for nothing, they find themselves entirely destitute of provisions when their hunting and fishing prove

unsuccessful, and then they are said to make no difficulty of eating one another. The most dastardly are the first sacrifices ; it is further pretended, that when a man arrives at such an age that he can only be a burthen and expence to his family, he himself passes a cord round his own neck, the extremities of which he presents to the child who is dearest to him, who strangles him as expeditiously as he can, believing that in so doing, he performs a good action, not only by putting an end to the sufferings of his father, but likewise by advancing his happiness ; for these Indians imagine, that a man who dies old is born again in the other world at the age of a child at the breast ; and that, on the contrary, those who finish their course soon, become old when they arrive at the country of souls.

The young women among these people never marry but with the advice of their parents, and the son-in law is obliged to stay with his father-in-law, and be subservient to him in every thing, till he has children himself. The young men leave their father's houses very early. These Indians burn their dead bodies, and wrap the ashes in the bark of a tree, which they lay into the ground. Afterwards they erect upon the grave a sort of monument with posts, to which they fix tobacco, in order that the deceased may have materials for smoaking in the other world. If he was a hunter, his bow and arrows are suspended there likewise. The mothers lament their children for twenty days, and presents are made to the fathers, who make an acknowledgment for them by a feast. War is held in less estimation amongst them than hunting ; but before any person can be esteemed a good hunter, he must fast for three days running, without tasting any thing whatever, and all that time he must have his  
face



face painted with black. The feast being ended, the candidate offers up a sacrifice to the great spirit, consisting of a morsel of each of the animals he has been used to hunt, being commonly the tongue and muzzle, which, except on such occasions, are always the portion of the hunter himself. His parents and relations would rather die of hunger than touch it, and he is allowed to regale his friends and strangers only in this manner.

It is further asserted, that these Indians are perfectly disinterested, that they possess a fidelity proof against all temptation, that they cannot endure a lie, and hold deceit in abhorrence. This, Madam, is what I have been able to learn with respect to these northern people, with whom we have never maintained any regular commerce, and have only seen them in a transient manner. We shall now proceed to those with whom we are better acquainted, who may be divided into three classes distinguished by their languages and their peculiar geniuses.

In this vast extent of country, properly called New-France, and bounded on the north by Hudson's-Bay, which was dismembered from it by the treaty of Utrecht, on the east by the sea, by the English colonies on the south, by Louisiana on the south-east, and by the Spanish possessions on the west; I say, in this vast extent of country there are but three mother-tongues, from which all the rest are derived; these are, the Sioux, Algonquin, and Huron languages; we are but little acquainted with the people who speak the first, and nobody knows how far they extend. We have hitherto had no trade with any but the Sioux and Affiniboils, and

even this trade has not been very regularly carried on.

Our missionaries have endeavoured to make a settlement amongst the first, and I knew one who regretted very much his not being able to succeed, or rather his not staying longer amongst them, as they seemed to be extremely docile. There is, perhaps, no people to the north-west of the Mississippi, of whom we can receive better and more authentic information than this, by reason that they can carry on a trade with all the other nations on this immense continent. They dwell commonly in meadows under large tents made of skins, which are very well wrought, and live on wild oats, which grow in great plenty in their meadows and rivers, and by hunting, especially the buffalo, which are covered with wool, and are found by thousands in their meadows. They have no fixed abode, but travel in great companies like the Tartars, never stopping in any place longer than they are detained by the chase.

Our geographers divide this people into the *wandering Sioux*, and the *Sioux of the Meadows*, into the *Sioux of the East*, and the *Sioux of the West*. This division does not seem to me to be well founded. All the Sioux live in the same manner, whence it happens, that a village which the year before was on the eastern bank of the Mississippi, shall be this year on the western bank, and that those who have lived for some time on the banks of the river St. Peter, shall, perhaps, be at present in some meadow a great distance from it. The name Sioux, which we have given to these Indians, is entirely of our own invention, or rather the two last syllables of the word *Nadouessioux*, a name by which several nations distinguish them. Others call them *Nadouessis*.

*Louessis*. This nation is the most populous we know in Canada. They were sufficiently pacific, and but little addicted to war, before the Hurons and Outawais when they fled from the fury of the Iroquois, took refuge in their country. They laughed at them for their simplicity, and made them warlike at their own expence. The Sioux have a plurality of wives, and severely punish such as are wanting in conjugal fidelity. They cut off the tip of their noses, and make a circle in the skin on the top of their heads, and afterwards tear it off. I have seen some persons, who were persuaded these people spoke with the Chinese accent; it would be no difficult matter to determine this fact, or if their language has any affinity with that of China.

Those persons who have had intercourse with the Assiniboils, tell us, that they are tall, well-made, robust, active, and inured to cold, and all manner of fatigue; that they are pricked over all the body, and marked with the figures of serpents and other animals; and that they are in use to undertake very long journeys. There is nothing in all this which distinguishes them from the other nations of this continent which we are acquainted with; but what particularly characterizes them, is, their being extremely phlegmatick, at least they appear so in respect of the Christinaux who trade with them, and who are indeed of an extraordinary vivacity, continually dancing and singing, and speaking with precipitation and a volubility of tongue, which is not observed in any other Indian nation.

The true country of the Assiniboils, is in the neighbourhood of a lake which bears their name, with which we are but little acquainted. A Frenchman, whom I saw at Montreal, assured me he had  
been



been there, but had seen it only in a transient manner, as one sees the sea in a harbour. It is the common opinion, that this lake is six hundred leagues in circumference; that there is no passage to it but through roads almost impracticable; that all its banks are delightful; that the climate is very temperate, though it lies to the north-west of Lake Superior, where it is extremely cold, and that it contains so great a number of islands, that it is called in that country, the *Lake of Islands*; some Indians call it *Michinipi*, which signifies the *Great Water*; and it seems in effect to be the reservoir or source of the greatest rivers, and all the great lakes of North-America; for on several accounts, all the following rivers are said to have their rise from it; the river Bourbon, which runs into Hudson's-Bay; the river St. Laurence, which carries its waters to the ocean; the Mississippi, which falls into the gulph of Mexico; the Missouri, which mixes with this last, and till their junction is in nothing inferior to it; and a fifth, which runs as they say, westward, and consequently discharges its waters into the South-Sea. It is a great pity that this lake was not known to those learned men who have sought for the terrestrial paradise all over the world; it might have been placed here with at least as great propriety as in Scandinavia. I do not, however, warrant all these facts, which are supported only by the accounts of travellers, and much less what the Indians have related, that in the neighbourhood of the Lake of the Assiniboils, there are men resembling the Europeans, who are settled in a country where gold and silver are so common, that they are employed in the meanest uses. Father Marquette, who discovered the Mississippi in 1673, says in his relation, that the Indians not only talked to him of the river which runs from this lake westward, but likewise  
 added



added, that they had seen large ships at its mouth: It appears besides, that the Assiniboils are the same people who in the old maps are marked under the name of *Poualaks*, and of whom some accounts say, that their country is contiguous to that of the *Christinaux* or *Killistinons*.

The Algonquin and Huron languages share betwixt them almost all the Indian nations of Canada, with whom we have any commerce. A person well acquainted with both might travel over above fifteen hundred leagues of a country without an interpreter, and make himself understood by above a hundred different nations, who have each of them their peculiar language. The Algonquin particularly has a prodigious extent. It begins at Acadia and the gulph of St. Laurence, and makes a circuit of twelve hundred leagues, turning from the south east by the north to the south-west. It is even said, that the Makingans or Wolves, and the greatest part of the Indians of New-England and Virginia speak dialects of this language.

The *Abenakis*, or *Conibas* bordering upon New-England, have, for their nearest neighbours the *Etechemins*, or *Malécites* in the country about the river Pentagoët, and further to the east are the *Micmaks* or *Souriquois*, whose country is properly Acadia, all along the coast of the gulph of St. Laurence as far as Gaspey, whence a certain author has called them *Gaspeians*, as well as the neighbouring islands. Going up the river St. Laurence, you do not meet with any Indian nations at present till you come to Saguenay. Yet when Canada was discovered and some years afterwards, several Indian nations were found in that territory, which spread themselves over the island of Anticosti, towards the  
moun-

mountains of Notre Dame, and along the northern side of the river. Those most frequently mentioned in ancient accounts are the *Bersiamites*, the *Papinachois*, and the *Montagnez*, who were likewise called, especially the latter, the *inferior Algonquins*, on account of their dwelling on the lower part of the river with respect to Quebec; but the greatest part of the rest are reduced to a few families which you meet with, sometimes in one place sometimes in another.

There were some nations which used to come down to the colony from the northern parts, sometimes by the Saguenay, but oftener by *Trois Rivières*, of whom we have heard no mention made for some time past. Such were amongst others the *Attikamegues*, who came from a great distance, and were surrounded by several other nations who extended themselves to the country about Lake *St. John*, and as far as the lakes of the *Mistassins* and *Nemisican*. These are almost all put to the sword by the Iroquois, or destroyed by distempers, a consequence of the misery the fear of these barbarians has reduced them to; which is much to be regretted, as they were a people without vice, of a mild temper, and might have been easily gained over to Jesus Christ, and to the interest of the French nation. Between Quebec and Montreal, and towards *Trois Rivières* we still find a few *Algonquins* who trade with the French, but do not form a village. In the time of the first discoveries this nation possessed all the northern side of the river, from Quebec, where M. Champlain found them settled and made an alliance with them, as far as the lake of *St. Peter*.

From

From the island of Montreal, always taking a north course, you find a few villages of the *Nipissings*, the *Temiscamings*, the *Têtes de Boule*, or *Roundheads*, the *Amikouës*, and *Outaways*. The first, who were the true Algonquins, and have alone preserved the Algonquin language in its purity, have given their name to a small lake lying between Lake Huron, and the river of the Outaways. The *Temiscamings* possess the banks of another small lake, which likewise bears their name, and seems to be the true source of the river of the Outaways. The *Roundheads* are at no great distance, who have their name from the roundness of their heads; they think there is a great beauty in this figure, and it is very probable the mothers give it to their children, while in their cradles. The *Amikouës*, otherwise called the *nation of the Beaver*, are reduced almost to nothing; the few remaining of them are found in the island *Manitoualin* in the northern part of Lake Huron. The *Outaways* who were formerly very numerous inhabited the banks of that great river which bears their name, and of which they pretended to be the lords. I know not but of three villages of them, very indifferently peopled, of which I shall speak in the sequel.

Between Lake Huron and Lake Superior, even in the strait itself, by which the second discharges its waters into the first, there is a fall called by us *Sault St. Marie*, or the Fall of St Mary. The country round about it was formerly peopled by Indians, who it is said came from the southern banks of Lake Superior, and were called *Saulteurs*, that is to say, *Inhabitants of the Fall*. This name was probably given them to save the labour of pronouncing that which they gave themselves, which could not possibly be done without taking breath

two or three times \*. There is no nation, at least that I know of, settled on the banks of Lake Superior; but in the posts which we possess there a trade is carried on with the Christinaux, who come from the north-east, and speak the Algonquin language, and with the Assiniboils, who come from the north-west.

Lake *Michigan*, which is almost parallel to Lake Huron, into which it discharges itself, and is separated from it by a peninsula, about a hundred leagues in length, growing continually narrower towards the north, has but few inhabitants on its banks; I do not even know if ever any nation was fixed there, and it is without foundation, that it has been called in some maps the lake of the Illinois. Going up the *River St. Joseph*, the waters of which it receives, you find two villages of different nations, who have come from some other place not long since. On the west side of this lake is a large bay, extending eight and twenty leagues to the south, and called the *Baye des Puans*, or simply the *Bay*. Its entrance is very large, and interspersed with islands, some of which are from fifteen to twenty leagues in circumference. They were formerly inhabited by the *Poutewatamies*, whose name they bear, excepting some few on the right hand, where there are still some Indians called *Noquets*. The *Poutewatamies* possess at present one of the smallest of these islands, and have besides two other villages, one at the river *St. Joseph*, and the other at the *Narrows*. At the bottom of this bay are the *Sakis* and *Otchagras*, which last are likewise called *Puans* or *Stinkards*, for what reason I know not; but before you arrive amongst them you leave upon your right hand, another small nation

\* PANOIRIGOUETIOUHAK.

called



called *Malbomines*, or *Folles Avcires*; that is, wild Oat Indians.

A small river very much incommoded with falls, discharges itself into the bottom of this bay, and is known under the name of the *Riviere des Renards*, or, river of the Foxes, on account of its neighbourhood to the *Outagamies*, commonly called the *Renards* or Foxes. All this country is extremely beautiful, and that which stretches to the southward as far as the river of the Illinois is still more so; it is, however, inhabited by two small nations only, who are the *Kicapous*, and the *Muscoutins*. Some of our geographers have been pleased to give the latter the title of the *Nation of Fire*, and their country that of the *Land of Fire*. An equivocal expression has given rise to this denomination.

Fifty years ago, the Miamis were settled on the southern extremity of Lake Michigan, in a place called Chicagou, from the name of a small river, which runs into the lake, the source of which is not far distant from that of the river of the Illinois; they are at present divided into three villages, one of which stands on the river St. Joseph; the second on another river which bears their name, and runs into Lake Erie, and the third upon the river Ouabache, which empties its waters into the Mississippi; these last are better known by the appellation of *Ouyatanons*. There can be no doubt, that this nation and the Illinois were not long ago the same people, considering the great affinity which is observed between their languages; but I shall be able to speak of this with greater certainty when I shall be on the spot. I shall only observe farther, that the greatest part of the Algonquin nations, if we except those who are farther advanced to the

southward, busy themselves very little in cultivating the ground, but live almost entirely by fishing and hunting, and are likewise very little disposed to a sedentary life. A plurality of wives is in use amongst some of them ; yet, so far from encreasing, they diminish every day. There is not one nation in which there are reckoned above six thousand souls, and in some there are not above two thousand.

The Huron language is not so extensive as the Algonquin, which is undoubtedly owing to the nations who speak it, having always been of a less wandering disposition than the Algonquins. I say, the Huron language, to conform myself to the opinion most commonly received, for some still maintain, that the Iroquoise is the mother tongue ; be this as it will, all the Indians to the southward of the river St. Laurence, from the river Sorel to the extremity of Lake Erié, and even bordering upon Virginia, belong to this language, and whoever is acquainted with the Huron understands them all. Its dialects are multiplied extremely, and there are almost as many as there are villages. The five cantons which compose the Iroquois republick, have each their own, and all that was heretofore indifferently called Huron was not the same language. I have not been able to learn to what language the *Cherokees* belong, a pretty numerous nation, inhabiting those vast meadows between Lake Erié and the Mississippi.

But it ought to be observed, that as the greatest part of the Indians of Canada have had at all times an intercourse with one another, sometimes as allies, sometimes as enemies, though the three mother-tongues of which I have spoken have no sort of affinity or analogy with one another, these people,  
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have, notwithstanding found means to do business together without having occasion for an interpreter; whether through long custom they have acquired a facility of making themselves understood by signs; or, whether they have formed a sort of a common jargon which they have learned by practice. I am just now informed I must embark, I shall conclude this article the first leisure I have.

*I have the honour to be, &c.*





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## L E T T E R XII.

*Voyage to Catarocoui. Description of the country, and of the Rapides or falls in the river St. Lawrence. Description and situation of the Fort. Character and genius of the languages and nations of Canada. Origin of the war between the Iroquois and Algonkins.*

*Catarocoui, May 14, 1721.*

*Madam,*

I Set out from the Fall of St. Lewis on the 1st of May, after closing my last epistle, and lay at the western extremity of the island of Montreal, where I did not however arrive till midnight. On the morrow I employed the whole morning in visiting this country, which is exceeding fine. In the afternoon I crossed Lake St. Lewis, to go to the place called *les Cascades*, where I found such of my people, as had gone directly thither, employed in sewing their canoe, which they had let fall, as they were carrying it on their shoulders, and which was thus split from one end to the other. This, Madam, is the pleasure, and at the same time the inconvenience of travelling in such small vehicles, the

least thing in the world breaks them, but then the remedy is both ready and easy: all you have to do, is to provide yourself with a sufficient quantity of bark, gum, and roots; besides, there are few places where you may not meet with gum and roots sufficient for stitching your canoe.

What they call *les Cascades*, is a *rapide* or fall, situated exactly at the upper end of the island Perrot, which separates lake St. Lewis from the lake *des deux Montagnes*. To shun this, you keep a little to the right, and make your canoes go empty over a part of the river called *le Trou*: you afterwards bring them on shore, and then make over a carrying place of half a quarter of a league; that is to say, you carry your canoe and all your baggage on your shoulders. This is to shun a second *rapide* called *le Bouisson* or the bush, being a fine sheet of water, falling from a flat rock of about a foot and a half high. One might be delivered from this trouble by hollowing a little the bed of a small river, which discharges itself into another above the *Cascades*. The expence would be no great matter.

Above the *Bouisson*, the river is a large quarter of a league broad, and the lands on both sides are excellent and well wooded. They begin to clear those lying on the northern bank, and it would be very easy to make a highway from the point opposite to the island of Montreal, as far as the height or creek called *La Galette*. By this means one might shun a passage of forty leagues, and a navigation rendered almost impracticable with *Rapides*, and always exceeding tedious. A fort would even be better placed at *La Galette*, where it would also be of more service than at Catarocoui, because not a single canoe can pass it without being seen; whereas at Catarocoui, they

they may slip thro' between the islands without being perceived. Moreover, the lands about *La Galette* are excellent, and for this reason there must always be plenty of provisions, which would save a considerable expence. Besides, a vessel might sail from hence to Niagara in two days with a favourable wind. One of the objects in view, in building the fort of Cataracoui, was the commerce with the Iroquois; but those Indians would as readily come to *La Galette* as to Cataracoui. They would indeed have a little farther to travel, but they would shun a passage of eight or ten leagues cross lake Ontario: lastly, the fort at Galette would cover the whole country lying between the river of the Outawais and the river St. Lawrence; for this country cannot be attacked on the side towards the river, by reason of the *Rapides*, and nothing is more easy than to defend the banks of the great river. I owe these observations to a commissary of the marine, who was sent by the king in 1706 to visit all the remote parts of Canada.

The same day, the 3d of May, I advanced three leagues, and arrived at the place called *Aux Cedres*. This is the third fall or *rapide*, and has taken its name from the great number of cedars which were formerly in this place: but they have since been mostly cut down. On the 4th I could get no farther than to the fourth rapid, called *le Coteau de Lac*, tho' no more than two leagues and a half from the preceeding, because one of my canoes happened to split near it. Your Grace will not be surpris'd at the frequency of these shipwrecks, after you have been informed of the construction of these diminutive gondolas. I think I have already told you there are two sorts of them; the one of the bark of elm, wider, and of very coarse workmanship, but com-

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monly the largest. I know no nation but the Iroquois, which have any of this sort. The others are of the bark of the birch tree, of a breadth less proportioned to their length, and much better and neater built. It is these latter I am going to describe to you, as all the French, and almost all the Indians use no other.

They extend the pieces of bark, which are very thick on flat and extremely thin timbers of Cedar-wood. All these timbers from head to stern are kept in form by little cross bars, which form the different seats in the canoe. Two girders of the same materials, to which these bars are fastened or sewed, bind the whole fabric. Between the timbers and the bark are inserted small pieces of cedar, still more slender than the timbers, and which for all that contribute to strengthen the canoe, the two extremities of which rise gently, and terminate in two sharp points bending inwards. These two extremities are perfectly alike; so that in order to go backward, the canoe-men have only to change offices. He who happens to be behind steers with his oar, still rowing at the same time; and the chief employment of he who is forwards, is to take care that the canoe touch nothing that may break it. They all sit low down, or on their knees, and their oars are a sort of paddles from five to six feet long, commonly of maple. But when they are to stem any strong current, they are obliged to make use of a pole, and to stand upright, and this is called *picquer le fond*, or piercing the bottom. They must be well experienced to be able to preserve their balance in this work, for nothing can be lighter, and consequently easier to upset, than these vehicles, the largest of which, with their whole loading, do not draw above half a foot water.

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The bark of which they are built, as well as the timbers, are sewed with the roots of fir-trees, which are more pliant, and less apt to dry than the osier. All the seams are gummed within side and without, but they must be examined every day, to see whether the gum has scaled off. The largest canoes carry twelve men, two and two, and four thousand weight, or two tons. Of all the Indians, the most expert builders are the Outawais, and in general the Algonquin nations excel the Huron Indians in this trade. There are few French who can make a canoe even so much as tolerably well, but in conducting them, they are at least full as sure to trust to as the natives. as they exercise themselves at it from their infancy. All these canoes, the smallest not excepted, carry sail, and with a favourable wind, make twenty leagues a-day. Without sails you must have able canoe-men, to make twelve in still water.

From Coteau de Lac, to lake St. Francis, you have only a large half league. This lake which I crossed on the 5th, is seven leagues long, and at most three in breadth where broadest. The lands on both sides of it are low, but seem indifferent good. The rout from Montreal thither lies somewhat south-west, and lake St. Francis lies west-south west and east-south east. I encamped immediately above it, and in the night was awakened with piercing cries, as of people making lamentations. I was frightened at first, but they soon made me easy, by telling me that it was a kind of cormorants called *Huarts* from their howling. They also told me these howlings were a sign of wind the next day, and it actually was so.

On the sixth I passed what they call *les Chefnaux du Lac*. This they call the channels, formed by a multitude of islands, which occupy almost all the river in this place. I never saw a more charming country, and the soil appears excellent. The rest of the day we did nothing but clear the *rapides*: the most considerable called *le Moulinet*, terrified me only to look at it, and we had much ado to extricate ourselves from it. I made however this day, almost seven leagues, and encamped at the foot of the fall called *le long Sault*: this is a *rapide* half a league in length, where canoes cannot sail up, but half loaded. We passed it on the 7th in the morning. We afterwards went on till three in the afternoon under sail, when the rain obliged us to encamp, and detained us all next day. There even fell on the 8th a little snow, and on the night it froze as in France in the month of January. We were however under the same parallel with Languedoc. On the ninth we passed *le Rapide plat*, or flat fall, about seven leagues from the *Sault*, and five from *le Galots*, which is the last of the *Rapides*. La Galette is a league and a half farther, where we arrived on the 10th. I could never have wearied of admiring the country between this creek and the Gallots. It is impossible to see nobler forests. I remarked especially oaks of an amazing height.

Five or six leagues from la Galette, is an island called Tonihata, the soil of which appears tolerably fertile, and which is about half a league long. An Iroquois, called the Quaker, for what reason I know not, a man of excellent good sense, and much devoted to the French, had obtained the right to it from the Compté de Frontenac. and he shews his patent to every body that desires to see it. He has however sold his lordship for four *pots* of brandy; but

but he has reserved the usufruit for his own life, and has got together on it eighteen or twenty families of his own nation. I arrived in his island on the 12th, and paid him a visit. I found him at work in his garden; this is not usual with the Indians; but this person affects to follow all the French manners. He received me very well, and would have regaled me, but the fine weather invited me to pursue my voyage. I took my leave of him, and went to pass the night two leagues from hence in a very pleasant spot. I had still thirteen leagues to sail before I could reach Catarocoui; the weather was fine, and the night very clear; this prevailed with us to embark at three in the morning. We passed thro' the middle of an archipelago called the thousand islands, and I am fully persuaded there are above five hundred of them. After you have got from among them, you have only a league and an half to sail to reach Catarocoui. The river here is opener, and is full half a league over. You leave afterwards on your right three large creeks of a good depth, and on the third the fort stands.

This fort has four bastions built of stone, which occupy a quarter of a league in circuit. Its situation is truly exceeding pleasant. The banks of the river present on all side landships of great variety, which is also the case at the entry of lake Ontario, at no more than a short league's distance: it is adorned with a number of islands of different extent, all of them well wooded, and without any thing to confine the prospect on that side. This lake bore for some time the name of St. Lewis, it afterwards obtained that of Frontenac, as did also the fort of Catarocoui, of which Count Frontenac was the founder. The lake however insensibly recovered its ancient

cient appellation, which is Huron in Iroquois, and the fort that of the place where it stands.

The soil from la Galette hither is barren enough, but this is only on the out skirts; beyond that it is excellent. There is opposite to the fort a very pleasant island in the middle of the river. They formerly put some hogs in it, which multiplied greatly, and whose name it bears. There are two other small islands below this, and half a league distant from each other; one is called l'Isle aux Cedres, and the other l'Isle aux Cerfs. The creek of Catarouoi is double, that is, there is a point very near the middle which advances a great way into the water, and under which there is excellent anchoring ground for the largest vessels. Mons. de la Salle, so celebrated for his discoveries and misfortunes, who was once lord of Catarocoui, and governor of the fort, had two or three vessels here which were sunk, and are still to be seen. Behind the fort is a morass, which swarms with game. This is at once a diversion, and an advantage to the garrison. There was formerly a very large commerce carried on at this place, especially with the Iroquois, and it was to hinder them from carrying their furs to the English, and to hold themselves in respect, the fort was built. But this commerce lasted not long, and the fort has not been able to prevent those Barbarians from doing us abundance of mischief. They have still a few families without the fort, as well as some of the *Missisaguez*, an Algonquin nation, who have still a town on the western shore of lake Ontario, another at Niagara, and a third at *le Detroit*, or the Narrows.

I found here, Madam, an occasion of sending my letters to Quebec; I am going to lay hold of some hours



hours leisure to fill this with what I have still to inform you of, with respect to the different languages of Canada. Those who have studied them to the bottom, pretend that the three of which I formerly made mention, have all the marks of primitive languages : and it is certain that they have not any common origin. Their pronounciation would be alone sufficient to prove this. The Sioux Indian hisses rather than speaks. The Huron knows none of the labial letters, speaks thro' the throat, and aspirates almost all the syllables ; the Algonquin pronounces with a softer tone, and speaks more naturally. I have not been able to learn any thing particular, with respect to the first of these three tongues ; but our ancient missionaries have laboured much on the two others, and on their principal dialects : the following is what I have heard said by the most able of them.

The Huron language has a copiousness, an energy, and a nobleness, which are scarce to be found united in any of the finest we know, and those whose native tongue it is, tho' but a handful of people, still retain a certain elevation of soul, which agrees much better with the majesty of their discourse, than with the wretched estate to which they are reduced. Some have imagined they found some resemblance with the Hebrew in it ; others, and a much greater, pretend that it has the same origin with that of the Greeks ; but nothing can be more frivolous than the proofs they alledge in support of it. We are in a special manner to beware of relying on the vocabulary of the Friar *Gabriel Sagbard* a Recollect, which has been cited in favour of this opinion : still less on that of James Cartier, and of the Baron de la Hontan. These three authors took at random a few words, some from the Huron, and  
others

others from the Algonquin tongues, which they very ill remembered, and which often signified something very different from what they imagined. How many errors have been occasioned by such mistakes in travellers!

The Algonquin language has not the same force with the Huron, but much more sweetness and elegance. Both have a richness of expression, a variety of turns and phrases, a propriety of diction, and a regularity, which are perfectly astonishing. But what is still more wonderful is, that amongst Barbarians, who never studied the graces of elocution, and who never knew the use of letters or writing, they never introduce a bad word, an improper term, or a faulty construction, and that the very children retain the same purity in their lightest and most familiar discourse.

Besides, their manner of animating whatever they say leaves no room to doubt their comprehending all the force of their expressions, and all the beauty and delicacy of their language. The dialects which are derived from both, have retained neither the same force nor the same graces. The Tsonnonthouans for instance, one of the five Iroquoise cantons, pass amongst the Indians for being the most rustick in their speech of any Indians.

In the Huron language every word is inflected or conjugated; there is a certain art which I cannot well explain to you, by which they distinguish verbs from nouns, pronouns, adverbs, &c. Simple verbs have a twofold conjugation; one absolute, and the other relative or reciprocal. The third persons have two genders, which are all known in their tongues: to wit, the noble and ignoble. As for

for number and tense, they have the same difference as the Greeks. For instance, to relate the account of a voyage, you use a different expression, if it is by land, from that you would make use of had it been by water. Active verbs are multiplied as often as there are different objects of their action. Thus the verb which signifies to eat, has as many different variations as there are different sorts of eatables. The action is differently expressed of an animated or inanimate thing : thus, to say you see a man or you see a stone, you must make use of two different verbs. To make use of any thing which belongs to him who uses it, or to the person to whom he addresses himself, there are so many different verbs.

There is something of all this in the Algonquin language, but the manner of it is different, and I am by no means in a condition to inform you of it. However, Madam, if it should follow from the little I have been telling you that the richness and variety of these languages render them expressly difficult to be learned, the poverty and barrenness into which they have since fallen cause an equal confusion. For as these people, when we first begun to have any intercourse with them, were ignorant of every thing which was not in use among themselves, or which fell not under the cognizance of their senses, they wanted terms to express them, or else had let them fall into desuetude and obscurity. Thus having no regular form of worship, and forming confused ideas of the deity and of every thing relating to religion, and never reflecting on any thing but the objects of their senses, or matters which concerned themselves or their own affairs, which were sufficiently confined, and being never accustomed to discourse of virtues, passions, and many other matters which  
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are the common subjects of conversation with us, as they neither cultivated the arts, except such as were necessary to them, and which were reduced to a very small number ; nor any science, minding only such things as were within the reach of their capacity, and having no knowledge or desire of superfluities, nor any manner of luxury or refinement ; when we had occasion to speak of all these topicks to them, there was found a prodigious void in their language, and it became necessary, in order to be understood by them, to make use of troublesome and perplexing circumlocutions to both them and us. So that after learning their language, we were under a necessity to teach them a new one partly composed of their own terms, and partly of ours, in order to facilitate the pronounciation of it. As to letters or characters they had none, and they supplied this want by a sort of hieroglyphicks. Nothing confounded them more than to see us express ourselves in writing with the same ease as by word of mouth.

If any one should ask me how I came to know that the Sioux, Huron and Algonkin languages are mother tongues rather than some others, which we look upon as dialects of these, I answer that it is impossible to be mistaken in this point, and I ask no other Proof of it than the words of Monf. l'Abbè Dubos, which I have already cited : but lastly, as we cannot judge in this case but by comparison, if by such reflections we are able to determine that all the languages of Canada are derived from these three already mentioned, I will acknowledge they do not amount to an absolute proof of their being primitive, and as old as the first institution or invention of languages. I add, that all these nations have  
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somewhat of the Asiatic genius in their discourse, which gives a figurative turn and expression to things, and which is what has probably made some conclude that they are of Asiatic extraction, which is moreover probable enough in other respects.

Not only the nations of the Huron language have always occupied themselves more than the other Indians in husbandry and cultivation of their lands; they have also been less dispersed, which has produced two effects; for first, they are better settled, lodged and fortified, but have also always been under a better sort of police, and a more distinct and regular form of government. The quality of chief, at least among the true Hurons who are Tionnon-tatez, is always hereditary. In the second place, till the wars of the Iroquois, of which we have been witnesses, their country was the most populous, tho' polygamy never was in use in it. They have also the character of being the most industrious, most laborious, most expert in the management of their affairs, and most prudent in their conduct, which can be attributed to nothing but to that spirit of society which they have better retained than the others. This is in a special manner remarked of the Hurons, who forming at present but one nation or people, and being reduced to two middling villages very remote from each other, are, notwithstanding the soul of all their councils in all matters regarding the community. 'Tis true that notwithstanding this difference, which is not to be discovered at first glance, there is a strong resemblance in the genius, manners, and customs of all the Indians of Canada; but this is owing to the mutual commerce they have carried on with each other for many ages.

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This is the proper place to take notice of the government of these Indians, as well as of their customs and religion : but I can as yet discover nothing but a chaos and confusion, which it is impossible for me to unravel. You would certainly blame me should I, like certain travellers, fill up my journal with every thing I had heard, without giving myself any trouble to ascertain the truth, and should retail to you all the extravagant stories, charged to the account of our Indians, or which have probably been drawn from their traditions. These traditions are moreover so very uncertain, and almost always contradict themselves so grossly, that it is almost impossible to pick out any thing certain or coherent. In fact, how should a people such as they have been found really to be, how should such persons transmit a faithful account of what has passed amongst them so many ages, since without any means of easing or assisting their memory ? And can it be conceived that men who think so little of the future, should have so much concern about the past, as to preserve faithful registers of it ? Thus, after all the researches that could possibly be made, we are yet in the dark and to seek, as to the situation of Canada, when we first discovered it towards the middle of the sixteenth century.

The sole point of their history which has come down clothed with any degree of probability, is the origin of the war, which Mons. Champlain found kindled between the Iroquois on one side, and the Hurons and Algonquins on the other, and in which he engaged much too far for our real interests. I have ever been unable to discover the epocha of it, but I do not believe it of very old standing. I will not put an end to this letter with this account : but I warn you before hand, that I don't pretend

pretend to vouch for this historical piece, tho' I have it from pretty good hands.

The Algonquins, as I have already observed, occupied all that tract of country lying between Quebec, and possibly from Tadoussac to the Lake Nipissing, running along the north shore of the river St. Lawrence, and tracing upwards the great river, which discharges itself into the former above the island of Montreal. This would incline us to judge that this people was then pretty numerous, and it is certain it has long made a very great figure in this part of America, where the Hurons only were able to dispute the superiority with them over all the rest. With respect to skill in hunting, they had no equal, and stood also foremost in the lists of fame for prowess in war. The few remaining of them at this day, have not degenerated from the ancient renown of their fathers, nor have their misfortunes in the least tarnished their reputation.

The Iroquois had concluded a kind of treaty of alliance with them, which was equally and greatly advantageous to either party, but which too, in the estimation of Indians, (with whom a great huntsman and great warrior are in equal veneration) gave the Algonquins a real superiority over the Iroquois. The latter almost wholly taken up with the cultivating their fields, had stipulated to pay a certain proportion of their harvests to the Algonkins, who were on their part obliged to share with them the fruits of their huntings, and to defend them against all invaders. These two nations lived in harmony for a considerable while, but an unreasonable piece of pride in the one, and a certain, sudden, and unexpected disgust on the other, broke all bounds of



concord, and embroiled those two nations in an irreconcilable quarrel.

As the winter season is that of their great hunting, and as the earth being covered with snow, furnishes no employment to the husbandman, the Indians of both confederate nations joined camps and wintered abroad in the forests. But the Iroquois generally left the hunting to the Algonquins, and contented themselves with fleaing the beasts, curing their flesh, and dressing the skins. This is now every where the business of the women: possibly this was not then the case: be this as it will, the Iroquois were perfectly satisfied. Now and then however some particular persons among them had a fancy to make an essay at hunting, the Algonquins making no opposition to this practice. In this they acted like bad politicians. It happened one winter that a company of the two nations halted in a place where they made sure of a successful hunting; and six young Algonquins, accompanied with as many Iroquoise of the same age, were sent out to begin the work.

They saw at first a few elks, and immediately prepared to give them chase. But the Algonquins would not suffer the Iroquois to accompany them, and gave them to understand that they would have employment enough in fleaing the beasts they should catch. As ill luck would have it for these braggadocio's, three days passed without their being able to kill a single elk, tho' they started a great number. This small success mortified them, and probably highly pleased the Iroquois, who earnestly desired to be allowed to go some other way, where they flattered themselves they would prove more fortunate. Their proposal was agreed to by the Algonquins,



quins, just as David's brethren did formerly, when that young shepherd asked leave to go and fight the giant Goliath. They told them it was vain to pretend to be abler huntsmen than the Algonquins; that their office was to turn the glebe, and that it became them to leave the honourable profession of hunting to their betters, to whom that exercise was more suitable.

The Iroquois affronted at this answer made no reply, but on the night following, they set out privately to hunt. The Algonquins, when they awoke, were surprised to find the Iroquois gone, but their surprise was soon changed into the most violent hatred. For the same evening they had the mortification to see the Iroquois returning loaded with the flesh of elks. There are no mortals more susceptible of an affront, or who carry their resentment farther than the Indians. The effects of this were sudden, for the Iroquois had scarce closed their eyes, when they were all butcher'd. Such a murder could not be long concealed, and tho' their bodies were buried secretly, it was very soon known to their nation. They at first made their complaints with great moderation, but they insisted on having justice done on the murderers. They were too much despised to obtain their request, nor were they thought worthy of receiving the smallest satisfaction.

The Iroquois being thus drove to despair, came to a determined resolution to revenge the contempt shewn them, and piqued themselves more on punishing this, than even the murder itself. They bound themselves by oath to perish to a man, or to have their revenge; but as they did not believe themselves in a condition to try their fortune against the Algonquins, the terror of whose name alone kept

all the other nations in awe, they went to a distance from them, to try their strength against some other less dreadful enemy, whom they provoked on purpose, and after they thought themselves sufficiently inured to warfare, they poured all at once upon the Algonquins, and commenced that war of which we saw only the conclusion, and which set all Canada on fire. This has been continued by the Iroquois with unparalled fury, and with a fierceness so much the more dreadful, as it was deliberate, and as it had nothing of that headstrong rage, which hurries men into bad measures, and which is soon over. Besides, Indians never think they have enough of revenge, till they have entirely exterminated their enemies ; which is likewise more true of the Iroquois than of the other nations. They commonly say of them, that they advance like foxes, attack like lions, and fly like birds. Thus they are almost always sure of their blow, and their conduct has succeeded so well with them, that had it not been for the French, there would not have been left so much as the memory of any of those nations which dared to oppose themselves to this deluge.

Those who suffered most were the Hurons, who engaged in this war as allies, auxiliaries, or neighbours to the Algonquins, or because they lay in the way of both. We have seen with astonishment one of the most populous and warlike nations on this continent, and the most esteemed of them all either for wisdom or good sense, almost wholly disappear in a few years. We may even say that there is not any nation in all this part of America who have not paid very dearly, for the Iroquois being obliged to take up arms, and I know none in all Canada except the Abenakis, whom they have not molested in their own countries. For after they were once  
entered,

entered, and proved their success in war, and had tasted of the sweets of conquest, they could no longer remain quiet, like lions, whose thirst after blood is only increased by tasting of it. One would hardly imagine to what an immense distance they have gone to seek out their enemies, and to give them battle. Notwithstanding, by dint of making continual war, as they were not without several checks at different times, they have found themselves extremely diminished; and were it not for the slaves they have made on all hands, most of whom they have adopted, their situation would be equally miserable with that of the nations they have subdued.

What happened in this respect to the Iroquois, may with still more reason be said of the other Indians in this country, and we are not to wonder if, as I have already remarked, these nations diminish daily in a very sensible manner. For tho' their wars appear less ruinous than ours at first sight, they are however much more so in proportion. The most numerous of these nations perhaps never contained above sixty thousand souls, and there sometimes happen battles, in which case there is much blood spilt. A surprise, or *coup de main*, sometimes destroys a whole town; oftentimes the fear of an irruption of an enemy makes a whole canton be deserted, when the fugitives to shun the sword of the enemy, or their torturing punishments, expose themselves to die of hunger and misery in the woods, or on mountains, having seldom leisure or consideration enough to carry the necessary provisions to such places. This happened in the last age to a great number of Hurons and Algonquins, whose fate it has been impossible to learn.

*I am, &c.*





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## L E T T E R XIII.

*Description of the country to the river of the Onnontagués. Of the flux and reflux in the great lakes of Canada. Manner in which the Indians sing the war-song. Of their God of War. Manner of declaring war. Of the collars of Wampum or Porcelain, and the Calumet, with their customs relating to peace and war.*

*Anse de la Famine, May 16th, 1721.*

*Madam,*

**H**ERE I am detained by a contrary wind, which has the appearance of lasting some time, and keeping me above a day in one of the worst places in the world. I shall endeavour to divert my chagrin by writing to you. Whole armies of those pigeons we call turtles are continually passing here, and if one of them would take charge of my letters, perhaps, you might hear of me before I leave this place; but the Indians have not as yet thought of training up these birds to this piece of dexterity, as it is said the Arabians and several other nations did formerly.

I embarked on the 14th, precisely at the same hour, on which I arrived the evening before at Catarocoui. I had only six leagues to make, in order to gain the island *aux Chevreuils*, or of Roebucks, where there is a good harbour capable of receiving large barks; but my Canadians having forgot to examine their canoe, and the sun having melted the gum in several places, it admitted the water on all sides, and I was obliged to stop two hours in order to repair it in one of the islands at the entrance of Lake Ontario; we continued our course afterwards till past ten at night, but not being able to gain the island *aux Chevreuils*, we were obliged to pass the remainder of the night at the corner of the forest.

Here I observed for the first time vines in the woods. There were almost as many as there were trees, and they always climbed quite to their top. This was the first time I had made this observation having never stopt before but in open fields; but I am told this continues all the way to Mexico. These vines are very thick at bottom, and bear great plenty of grapes, which, however, are no larger than pease, but this cannot be otherwise, seeing they are neither pruned nor cultivated. When ripe they afford excellent feeding for the bears, who climb to the tops of the highest trees in quest of them. After all, they have only the leavings of the birds, which would soon rob whole forests of their vintage.

Next day I set out early in the morning, and at eleven o'clock stopt at the island *aux Gallots*, three leagues beyond the island *aux Chevres*, in 43 deg. 33 min. lat. I reembarked a little after mid-day, and made a traverse of a league and a half, in order

der to gain the *Point of the Traverse*; for had I coasted along the main-land in order to get at that place, from that where I spent the night, I should have had a course to make of above forty leagues, which way, however, must be taken when the lake is not very calm; for if it be ever so little agitated, the waves are as heavy as those at open sea. It is not even possible to range along the coast when the wind is any thing large.

From the point of the *Isle aux Gallots*, you see to the westward the river of *Chauguen*, formerly the river of *Onnontagué*, at the distance of fourteen leagues. As the lake was calm, as there was no appearance of bad weather, and as we had a small breeze at east, just sufficient to fill our sails, I took a resolution to steer directly for that river, in order to save a circuit of fifteen or twenty leagues. My guides who had more experience than I, imagined this enterprize hazardous, but yielded out of complaisance to my opinion. The beauty of the country which lay on the left hand, did not tempt me, any more than the salmon and great quantities of other excellent fish, which are taken in the six fine rivers, which lie at the distance of two or three leagues from one another\*. We therefore bore away, and till four o'clock had no reason to repent it; but then the wind rose all on a sudden, and we should have been very well pleased to have been close in with the land. We made towards the nearest, from which we still were three leagues, and had great difficulty to gain it. At last about seven

\* The river of Assumption is a league from the point of the Traverse, that of Sables three leagues farther; that of la Planche two leagues beyond the former, that of La Grande Famine two leagues more, that of La Petite Famine one league, and that of La grosse Ecorce another league.

in the evening we landed at *Anse de la Famine*, or the Creek of Famine, so called, because M. de la Barre, governor-general of New-France, had very near lost his whole army there by hunger, and other distempers, when he was going upon an expedition against the Iroquois.

It was high time we should arrive, the wind was strong, and the waves ran so high that no one durst have crossed the Seine opposite to the Louvre, in such a situation as we were then in. This place is indeed very proper for destroying an army which should depend on hunting and fishing for subsistence, besides that the air seems to be extremely unwholesome. Nothing, however, can exceed the beauty of the forest, which covers all the banks of this lake. The white and red oaks raise their heads as high as the clouds, and there is another tree of a very large kind, the wood of which is hard but brittle, and bears a great resemblance to that of the plane-tree; its leaves have five points, are of a middle size, of a very beautiful green in the inside, but whitish without. It has got the name of the cotton-tree, because it bears a shell nearly of the thickness of an Indian Chestnut-tree, containing a sort of cotton which, however seems to be good for nothing.

As I was walking on the banks of the lake I observed that it sensibly loses ground on this side, the land being here much lower and more sandy for the space of half a league, than it is beyond it. I likewise observed that in this lake, and I am told that the same thing happens in all the rest; there is a sort of flux and reflux almost instantaneous, the rocks near the banks being covered with water, and uncovered again several times in the space of



a quarter of an hour, even should the surface of the lake be very calm, with scarce a breath of wind. After reflecting for some time on this appearance, I imagined it was owing to the springs at the bottom of the lakes, and to the shock of their currents with those of the rivers, which fall into them from all sides, and thus produce those intermitting motions.

But would you believe it, Madam, that at this season of the year, and in the 43d deg. of latitude, there is not as yet so much as a single leaf upon the trees, though we have sometimes as hot weather as with you in the month of July. This is undoubtedly owing to the earth's having been covered with snow for several months, and not being as yet sufficiently warm to open the pores of the roots, and to cause the sap to ascend. The *Grande* and *Petite l'amine* scarce deserve the name of rivers; they are only brooks, especially the latter, but are pretty well stocked with fish. There are eagles here of a prodigious size, my people have just now thrown down a nest, in which there was a cart-load of wood and two eaglets, not as yet feathered, but as big as the largest Indian pullets. They have eat them, and declare they were very good. I return to Catarocoui, where, the night I passed there, I was witness to a pretty curious scene.

About ten or eleven o'clock at night, just as I was going to retire, I heard a cry, which I was told was the war-cry, and soon after saw a troop of the Missisaguez enter the fort singing all the way. It seems, for some years past, these Indians have been engaged in a war which the Iroquois carried on against the Cherokees, a numerous nation inhabiting a fine country to the southward of Lake Erié;  
and

and since that time their young men have had a strange itching to be in action. Three or four of these bravoës equipped as if they had been going to a masquerade, with their faces painted in such a manner as to inspire horror, and followed by almost all the Indians in the neighbourhood of the fort, after having gone through all the cabbins singing their war songs to the sound of the chichikoué, which is a sort of calabash filled with little flint stones, came to perform the same ceremony through all the apartments in the fort, in order to do honour to the commandant and the rest of the officers.

I own to you, Madam, that this ceremony has something in it which inspires one with horror when seen for the first time, and I had not been as yet so fully sensible as I then was, that I was among barbarians. Their songs are at all times melancholy and doleful; but here they were to the last degree frightful, occasioned perhaps entirely by the darkness of the night, and the apparatus of this festival, for such it is amongst the Indians. This invitation was made to the Iroquois, who finding the war with the Cherokees begin to turn burthensome, or not being in the humour, required time for deliberation, after which every one returned home.

It should seem, Madam, that in these songs they invoke the god of war, whom the Hurons call *Areskouï*, and the Iroquois *Agreskouë*; I know not what name he bears in the Algonquin languages. But it is not a little surprising, that the Greek word *Agns*, which is Mars, and the god of war in all those countries which have followed the theology of Homer, should be the root whence several terms in the Huron and Iroquois languages seem to be derived,

rived, which have a relation to war. *Aregouen* signifies to make war, and is conjugated in this manner: *Garego*, I make war; *Sarego*, thou makest war; *Arego*, he makes war. Moreover, *Arefkoui* is not only the Mars of these people, but likewise the sovereign of the gods, or as they express it, the Great Spirit, the Creator and Master of the Universe, the Genius who governs all things; but it is chiefly in warlike expeditions that they invoke him; as if the attribute, which does him greatest honour, was, that of being the God of armies. His name is their war-cry before battle, and in the heat of the engagement: in their marches likewise they repeat it often, as if to encourage one another, and to implore his assistance.

To take up the hatchet, is to declare war; every private person has a right to do it, and nothing can be said against him; unless it be among the Hurons and Iroquois, where the matrons command and prohibit a war as seems good unto them; we shall see in its proper place how far their authority extends in these matters. But if a matron wants to engage any one who does not depend on her, to levy a party for war, whether it be to appease the manes of her husband, son, or near relation, or whether it be to procure prisoners, in order to replace those in her cabin, of whom death or captivity has deprived her; she must make him a present of a collar of Wampum, and such an invitation is seldom found ineffectual.

When the business is to declare war in form between two or three nations, the manner of expressing it is *to hang the kettle over the fire*; which has its origin without doubt from the barbarous custom of eating their prisoners, and those who have been killed

killed after boiling them. They likewise say simply, that they are going to *eat such a nation*, which signifies that they are going to make war against them in the most destructive and outrageous manner, and indeed they seldom do otherwise. When they intend to engage an ally in the quarrel, they send him a porcelain or wampum, which is a large shell, in order to invite him to drink the blood, or as the terms made use of signify, the broth of the flesh of their enemies. After all, this practice may have been very antient, without our being able to infer from thence, that these people have always been Anthropophagi, or Man-eaters. It was, perhaps, at first, only an allegorical manner of speaking, with examples of which the scripture often furnishes us. David, in all appearance, had not to do with enemies who were accustomed to eat human flesh, when he says: *Dum appropriant super me nocentes ut edunt carnes meas.* Psalms xxvi. 2. Afterwards some nations becoming savage and barbarous, may have substituted the reality in the room of the figure.

I took notice that the porcelain in these countries are shells; these are found on the coasts of New-England and Virginia; they are channelled, drawn out lengthwise, a little pointed, without ears and pretty thick. The fish contained in these shells are not good to eat; but the inside is of so beautiful a varnish with such lively colours, that it is impossible to imitate it by art. When the Indians went altogether naked, they made the same use of them which our first parents did of the leaves of the fig-tree, when they discovered their nakedness and were ashamed at it. They likewise hung them at their necks, as being the most precious things they had, and to this day their greatest riches and finest



finest ornaments consist of them. In a word, they entertain the same notion of them that we do of gold, silver, and precious stones ; in which they are so much the more reasonable, as in a manner they have only to stoop to procure riches as real as ours, for all that depends upon opinion. James Cartier in his memoirs makes mention of a shell of an uncommon shape, which he found, as he says, in the island of Montreal ; he calls it *Esfurni*, and affirms it had the virtue of stopping a bleeding at the nose. Perhaps, it is the same we are now speaking of ; but they are no longer to be found in the island of Montreal, and I never heard of any but the shells of Virginia which had the property Cartier speaks of.

There are two sorts of these shells, or to speak more properly two colours, one white and the other violet. The first is most common, and perhaps, on that account less esteemed. The second seems to have a finer grain when it is wrought ; the deeper its colour is, the more it is valued. Small cylindrical grains are made of both, which are bored through and strung upon a thread, and of these *the branches and collars* of Porcelain or *Wampum* are made. The branches are no more than four or five threads, or small straps of leather, about a foot in length, on which the grains or beads of Wampum are strung. The collars are in the manner of fillets or diadems formed of these branches, sewed together with thread, making four, five, six or seven rows of beads, and of a proportionable length ; all which depends on the importance of the affair in agitation, and dignity of the person to whom the collar is presented.

By

By a mixture of beads of different colours, they form such figures and characters as they have a mind, which often serve to distinguish the affairs in question. Sometimes the beads are plaited, at least it is certain that they frequently send red collars when a war is in agitation. These collars are carefully preserved, and not only compose part of the publick treasures, but are likewise their registers or annals, and ought to be studied by those who have the charge of the archives, which are deposited in the cabbin of the chief. When there are two chiefs in a village of equal authority, they keep the treasures and archives by turns for one night, but this night, at least at present, is a whole year. Collars are never used but in affairs of consequence; for those of less importance they make use of branches, or strings of porcelain, skins, blankets, maïz, either in grain or flour, and such like things; for all these make a part of the publick treasure. When they invite a village or a nation to enter into an alliance, sometimes they send them a pair of colours tinged with blood; but this practice is modern, and there is good reason to believe, they have taken the hint from the white colours of the French, and the red of the English. It is even said, that we ourselves first introduced it amongst them, and that they have thought of tinging theirs with blood, when the question was to declare war.

The calumet is no less sacred among the Indians than the collar of Wampum; it has even, if we may believe them a divine original, for they maintain, it was a present made them by the Sun. It is more in use among the southern and western nations, than among the eastern and northern, and is more frequently employed for peace than for war. *Calumet* is a Norman word, being a corruption of *Chaliorveau*,

*liorveau*, and the calumet of the Indians is properly the stalk of the pipe, but under that name is understood the whole pipe as well as the stalk. The stalk is very long in calumets of ceremony, and the pipe has the shape of our old hammers for arms; it is commonly made of a sort of reddish marble, very easy to work, and found in the country of the Aiouez, beyond the Mississippi. The stalk is of a light wood, painted with different colours, and adorned with the heads, tails, and feathers of the most beautiful birds, which in all probability is only intended for ornament.

The custom is to smoke in the calumet when it is accepted, and perhaps, there is no example of an engagement entered into in this manner being violated. The Indians at least are persuaded, that the great spirit never suffers an infraction of this kind to escape with impunity. If in the midst of a battle, an enemy presents a calumet, it may be refused; but if it is accepted, their arms on both sides must immediately be laid down. There are calumets for all different sorts of treaties. When an exchange is agreed upon in trade they present a calumet, in order to cement the bargain, which renders it in some measure sacred. When a war is in agitation, not only the stalk, but even the feathers with which it is adorned are red; sometimes they are red only on one side, and it is pretended, that from the manner in which the feathers are disposed, they know at first sight to what nation it is to be presented.

It cannot be doubted, but that the Indians, by causing those to smoke in the calumet, with whom they seek to enter into a treaty of alliance or commerce, intend to take the sun for a witness, and in

some measure for a guarantee of their mutual engagements ; for they never fail to blow the smoke towards that luminary ; but that from this practice, and from the ordinary use of the calumet, we ought to infer as some have done, that this pipe might originally be the Caduceus of Mercury, appears to me by so much the less probable, as the Caduceus had no manner of relation to the Sun, and as nothing is to be found in the traditions of the Indians, by which we can imagine they had ever the least acquaintance with the Grecian Mythology. It would, in my opinion, be much more natural to suppose, that these people, informed by experience that the smoke of their tobacco dissipated the vapours of the brain, made their heads clearer, raised their spirits, and put them into a better condition for managing affairs, have for that reason introduced it into their councils, where, indeed, they have the pipe continually in their mouths, and that after having maturely deliberated and taken their resolutions, they imagined they could not find a more proper symbol for affixing a seal to what had been agreed upon, nor a pledge more capable of securing its execution, than the instrument which had had so much share in their deliberations. Perhaps, Madam, you may think it more simple, still to say, that these people imagined nothing could be a more natural sign of a strict union, than smoking out of the same pipe, especially, if the smoke be offered to a Divinity, who sets the seal of religion upon it. To smoke then out of the same pipe, in sign of alliance, is the same thing as to drink out of the same cup, as has been at all times the practice among several nations. Such customs as these are too natural an offspring of the human mind, for us to seek for mysteries in them.



The size and ornaments of the calumets, which are presented to persons of distinction, on occasions of importance, are not so particular that we need search far for their motives. When men begin to have ever so little commerce together, or to entertain mutual respect for one another, they are soon accustomed to have certain regards for one another, chiefly on occasions when publick affairs are in agitation, or when they want to engage the good-will of those with whom they have business to transact, and hence proceeds the care they take to give a greater magnificence to the presents they make one another. But it is to the *Panis*, a nation settled on the banks of the Missouri, who extend themselves a good way towards New Mexico, that it is pretended the Sun gave the calumet. But these Indians have probably done like a great many other people, endeavoured to ennoble by the marvellous, a custom of which they were the authors; and all that can be concluded from this tradition, is, that the Panis paid the Sun a more ancient and distinguished worship than the other nations of that part of the continent of America, and that they were the first who thought of making the calumet a symbol of alliance. In the last place, if the calumet had been in its institution the caduceus of Mercury, it would have only been employed in affairs relating to peace or commerce, whereas it is certain, that it is used in treaties that have war for their object.

These hints, Madam, I thought necessary, in order to give you a perfect knowledge of what relates to the wars of the Indians, about which I shall entertain you in my next letters till I have exhausted the subject; at least, if they are digressions, they are not altogether foreign to my design. Besides,

a traveller endeavours to dispose in the least disagreeable manner he can every thing that he learns upon his rout.

*I am, &c.*

LETTER

## L E T T E R XIV.

*Description of the country from the Anse de la Famine to the Riviere des Sables. Motives of the Indians for going to war. Departure of the warriors for the campaign, with what precedes their setting out. Their manner of taking leave of their relations and countrymen. Their arms offensive and defensive. Their care in taking along with them their tutelary gods. Particularities of the country as far as Niagara.*

*Riviere des Sables, May 19, 1721.*

*Madam,*

I Am now once more stopped by a contrary wind, which arose the moment we were likeliest to make most speed. It even surpris'd us so abruptly, that we would have been in great danger had we not fortunately met with this small river to take sanctuary in. You must acknowledge there are a multitude of inconveniencies and disappointments to cope with in such a voyage as this. It is a very sad thing to sail a hundred, and sometimes two hundred leagues without meeting with a single house,

or

or seeing one human creature ; to be engaged in a voyage of two or three hundred leagues to shun a passage of twenty, made with many difficulties, and with the hazard of losing one's life by the caprice of the winds ; to be stopped, as it sometimes happens, for whole weeks, on some point or barren shore, or if it should happen to rain, to be obliged to take up one's lodging under some canoe, or in a tent : if the wind proves strong we must seek for shelter in some wood, where we are exposed to be crushed to death by the fall of some tree. These inconveniencies might be shunned in part by the building vessels for sailing on the lakes ; but in order to have this advantage, the trade must be better able to afford it.

We are now on the borders of the Iroquois cantons, which is an exceeding delightful country. We embarked early yesterday in the finest weather imaginable. There was not a single breath of wind, and the lake was as smooth as glass. About nine or ten o'clock we passed by the mouth of the river of Onnantague, which seemed to me to be about 120 feet in breadth. The lands near it are somewhat low, but exceeding well wooded. Almost all the rivers which water the Iroquois cantons discharge themselves into this, the source of which is a fine lake called *Gannentatka*, on the banks of which are saltpits. Towards half an hour past eleven we made sail by favour of a small breeze at north-east, and in a few hours pushed on as far as the Bay *des Goyogouins*, which is ten leagues from the Riviere of Onnantague. The whole coast in this tract is diversified with swamps and high lands somewhat sandy, covered with the finest trees, especially oaks, which seem as if planted by the hand of men.

A strong



A strong gale of wind from the land, which overtook us opposite to the Bay des Goyogouins, obliged us to take sanctuary in it. This is one of the finest spots I have ever seen. A peninsula well wooded advances from the middle, and forms a kind of theatre. On the left as you enter, you perceive in a bight a small island which conceals the mouth of a river, by which the Goyogouins descend to the lake. The wind did not continue long, we therefore set out again, and made three or four leagues farther. This morning we embarked before sun-rise, and have actually made five or six leagues. I know not how long the north-west wind may detain us here. Whilst I wait till a favourable gale arises, I will resume my relation of the wars of the Indians, where I left it off.

These Barbarians rarely refuse to engage in a war, when invited by their allies. They commonly do not even want any invitation to take up arms; the smallest motive, even a very nothing, is with them cause sufficient. But above all, vengeance is their darling passion; they have always some old or new grudge to satisfy; for no length of time ever closes those sort of wounds, let them be ever so slight. Thus one can never be sure that the peace is fully established between two nations who have been long enemies: on the other hand, the desire of replacing the dead by prisoners to appease their manes; the caprice of a private person, a dream which every one explains at random, with other reasons and pretexts equally frivolous, will often occasion a party to go to war, who thought of nothing less the day before.

'Tis true, these small expeditions, without consent of the council, are generally without any great

consequence, and as they demand no great preparations, there is little attention paid to them ; but generally speaking, they are not much displeased to see the youth exercised, and keep themselves in breath, and they must have very cogent reasons to oppose such a resolution ; besides, they rarely employ authority to this end, every one being master of his own actions : But they try to intimidate some by false reports which they take care to spread abroad ; others they solicit underhand ; they engage the chief to break off the party by presents, which is no difficult matter ; for a dream, true or false, no matter which, is all that is requisite to accomplish it. Amongst some nations their last resource is to address themselves to the nations, which is generally efficacious, but they never have recourse to this method, but when the affair is of much consequence.

A war in which the whole nation is concerned, is not so easily put an end to : they weigh with much deliberation the advantages and disadvantages of it, and whilst they are consulting, they take great care to remove every thing that may give the enemy the least suspicion of their intention of breaking with him. The war being once resolved upon, they consider first the providing the necessary provisions, and the equipage of the warriors, which require no long time. Their dances, songs, feasts, and certain superstitious ceremonies which vary greatly in different nations, require a much greater length of time.

He who is to command never thinks of levying soldiers, till he has observed a fast of several days, during which he is bedawb'd with black, holds no manner of discourse with any one, invokes day and night his tutelar genius, and above all he is very careful

careful to observe what dreams he has. Their firm persuasion, according to the presumptuous genius of those Barbarians, that he is marching forth to certain victory, never fails to inspire him with such dreams as he desires. The fast being ended, he assembles his friends, and holding a collar of porcelain in his hand, addresses them in words like these: My brethren, the Great Spirit is the author of what I speak, and has inspired me with the thought of what I am going to put in execution. The blood of such an one is not yet wiped away, his corpse is not yet covered, and I am going to perform this duty to him. He sets forth in like manner the other motives which move him to take up arms. “ I am therefore resolved to march to such a place  
 “ to take scalps, or to make prisoners ;” Or, “ I will  
 “ eat such a nation. Should I perish in this glo-  
 “ rious enterprize, or should any of my compa-  
 “ nions in it lose his life, this collar will serve to re-  
 “ ceive us, that we may not be for ever hid in the  
 “ dust, or in the mire.” That is, perhaps, it will be the recompence of him who buries the dead.

As he pronounces these last words, he lays the collar on the ground, and he who takes it up, by so doing declares himself his lieutenant ; he then thanks him for his zeal to revenge his brother, or to maintain the honour of the nation. Then they set water on to warm, wash the chief from his dawbing, dress, anoint with oil or fat, or paint his hair. They paint his face with different colours, and clothe him in his finest robe. Thus adorned, he sings with a hollow voice the song of death ; his soldiers, that is to say, all those who have offered themselves to accompany him (for no one is ever compelled) thunder out one after another their war song ; for every one has one peculiar to himself, which no other per-  
 son

son is allowed to use; and there are even some which are coveted by certain families.

After this previous measure, which passes in some remote place, and often in a stove, the chief communicates his project to the council, who sit upon it, without ever admitting him who is the author of it, to be present. As soon as his project is approved of he makes a feast; at which the chief, and sometimes the only, dish is a dog. Some pretend that this animal is offered to the god of war, before he is put in to the kettle, and possibly this may be the practice amongst some nations. I am glad, Madam, to have this opportunity of advertising you once for all, that I don't pretend to say that what I relate on this subject, is absolutely universal amongst all the nations. But it seems certain, that on the occasion I here speak of they make many invocations to their genii, good and evil, and above all to the god of war.

All this takes up several days, or rather the same thing is repeated for several days running: but tho' every one seems wholly employed in these festivals, each family takes its measures for obtaining a share of the prisoners, either to replace their losses, or to revenge their dead. In this view they make presents to the chief, who on his side gives both his promise and pledges besides. In default of prisoners they demand scalps, which are more easily obtained. In some places, as amongst the Iroquois, as soon as a military expedition is resolved on they set on the war kettle, and advertise their allies to send or bring something to it, to shew their approbation of the enterprize, and their readiness to take part in it.



All those who enlist themselves, give also to the chief, as a token of their engagement, a bit of wood with their mark upon it, and he who after that should draw back, would never be safe while he lived; at least he would be dishonoured for ever. The party once formed, the war chief prepares a new feast, to which the whole village is invited, and before any thing is tasted, he, or an orator for him, and in his name, accosts them in such words as these: “ My brethren, I know I am not worthy  
 “ to be called a man, tho’ you all know that I  
 “ have more than once looked an enemy in the  
 “ face. We have been slaughtered; the bones of  
 “ such and such persons are yet unburied, they cry  
 “ out against us, and we must satisfy their request.  
 “ They were once men as well as we; how there-  
 “ fore could we so soon forget them, and sit so long  
 “ in this lethargy on our matresses? In a word, the  
 “ genius who is the guardian of my honour and  
 “ the author of my renown, inspires me with  
 “ the resolution to revenge them. Youth, take  
 “ courage, anoint your hair, paint your visages,  
 “ fill your quivers, cause the forests resound with  
 “ the voice of your military songs, let us ease and  
 “ comfort the deceased, and shew them that we  
 “ have avenged them.”

After this discourse, and the applauses with which it never fails to be attended, the chief proceeds into the midst of the assembly, his hatchet in his hand, and sings his song; all his soldiers make responses in the same manner, and swear to second him or to die in the attempt. All this is accompanied with gestures highly expressive of their resolution never to give ground to an enemy; but it is to be remarked that not a syllable escapes any soldier, which signifies the least dependance. The whole consists in  
 a pro-

a promise to act with perfect unanimity and in concert. Besides, the engagement they lay themselves under, requires great acknowledgements on the part of the chief. For instance, as often as any one in the public dances strikes the post with his hatchet, and recalls to memory his most signal exploits, as is always the custom, the chief under whose conduct he performed them, is obliged to make him a present ; at least this is usual among some nations.

These songs are followed with dances ; sometimes this is no more than a fierce sort of march, but in cadence ; at others it is done by very lively gestures, expressive of the operations of a campaign, and always in cadence. Lastly, the whole ceremony concludes with a feast. The war chief is no more than a spectator of it, with his pipe in his mouth ; it is even common enough in every considerable feast, for him who does the honours of it, to touch nothing at all himself. The following days, and till the departure of the warriors, many things pass, the recital of which is not worth notice, and which are besides neither essential nor generally practised : but I cannot forget a custom singular enough, and with which the Iroquois in particular never dispense : it seems to have been devised to discover such persons as are endued with natural good sense, and what is called mother-wit, and are capable of governing themselves as well as others ; for these Indians whom we imagine barbarous people, believe it impossible for any one to possess true courage without being absolute master of his passions, or if he cannot endure the most cruel reverses that can possibly happen. The affair is this.

The most ancient of the military company treat the young people, at least such as have never seen

an enemy, with all the scorn and insults they are capable of devising. They throw hot embers on their heads; they throw the most cruel reproaches in their teeth; they in short load them with all manner of injuries, and carry this treatment to the greatest excess. All this must be endured with the utmost insensibility; to give at such occasions the least sign of impatience, would be sufficient to cause them be declared for ever incapable of bearing arms: But when this is done by persons of the same age, as it often happens, the aggressor must take care to do nothing wantonly, or out of private pique, or otherwise he would be obliged, when the sport is ended, to atone for the affront by a present. I say, when the sport is ended, for whilst it lasts they are obliged to bear every thing without being angry, tho' this sort of pastime often goes so far as the throwing big burning brands at each others heads, and giving heavy blows with cudgels.

As the hope of having their wounds cured, should they happen to receive any, is no small encouragement for the bravest to expose themselves boldly to danger, they afterwards prepare the drugs for this purpose, and this is the office of their jugglers. I will some other time tell you what sort of persons these are. The whole town being assembled, one of these quacks declares he is going to communicate to the roots and plants, of which he takes care to provide good store, the virtue of healing all sorts of wounds, and even of restoring the dead to life. He falls immediately a singing; the other quacks make responses to him, and it is believed that during the concert, which would not appear to your ear very melodious, and which is accompanied with many grimaces on the part of the actors, the medicinal quality is communicated to the plants. The chief juggler

gler then makes trial of them; he begins with bleeding his own lips, he applies his remedy; the blood which the impostor sucks in very dextrously ceases to flow, and the whole auditory cries out, *A miracle, a miracle*. After this, he takes a dead animal, and leaves the spectators as much time to consider as they chuse, when by means of a canule or pipe inserted under the tail, he causes it to move by blowing his herbs into its throat when the exclamations of admiration are redoubled. Lastly, the whole company of jugglers makes the tour of the cabbins, singing the praises and virtues of their remedies. These tricks at bottom deceive no one, but serve to amuse the multitude, and custom must be obeyed.

The following is another usage peculiart o the Miamis, and perhaps to some other nations in the neighbourhood of Louisiana. I have extracted it from the memoirs of a Frenchman who was eye-witness of it. After a solemn feast they placed, says he, on a kind of altar, some figures of pagods, made of bears skins, the heads of which were painted green. All the Indians passed before this altar, making their genuflexions, or bending their knees, and the quacks led the band, holding in their hand a sack, in which were inclosed all these things which were wont to be used in their invocation or worship. He was the clevereſt fellow who made the most extravagant contortions, and in proportion as any one distinguished himself this way, he was applauded with great shouts. After they had thus paid their first homage to the idols, they all danced in a very confused manner, to the sound of the drum and chichicoué; and during this the jugglers pretended to bewitch or charm several Indians, who  
seemed



seemed to be expiring under the power of their incantations : afterwards, by applying a certain powder to their lips, they restored them to life.

When this farce had lasted some time, he who presided at the feast, having two men and two women near him, run over all the cabbins, to intimate that the sacrifices were going to begin. On meeting any one in his way, he rested both hands on his head, and the other embraced his knees. The victims were to be dogs, and the cries of these animals, which were howling, and of the Indians who howled as if to answer them, with all their might were heard on all sides. When the viands were ready, they were offered to the pagods, they were afterwards eaten, and the bones were burnt. Mean time the juggler continued to restore the dead to life, and the whole concluded with distributing to these quacks a portion of whatever was most to their fancy in the whole town.

From the time of their coming to the resolution of making war, to the departure of the warriors, the nights are spent in singing, and the days in making the necessary preparations. They depute warriors to sing the war song amongst their neighbours and allies, whom they often take care to dispose to their desires before hand, and by secret negotiations. If their rout is by water, they build or repair their canoes ; if it happen to be in the winter season, they provide themselves in sledges and snow shoes. These snow shoes, which are absolutely necessary for walking in the snow, are about three feet long, and from fifteen to sixteen inches in their extreme width. They are of an oval shape, except that the hind part terminates in a point ; there are small bits of wood placed cross wise five or six inches from

from either end, which serve to strengthen them, and that on the fore part is as it were the string of a bow, under an opening in which the foot is inserted, and made fast with thongs. The tissue or covering of the snow shoe is made of straps of leather two fingers broad, and the border is of a light wood hardened in the fire. To walk well on these shoes, you must turn your knees inwards, keeping your legs at a good distance from each other. It is very difficult to accustom one's self to them; but when once you attain it, you walk easily and without fatiguing yourself any more than if you had nothing on your feet. It is impossible to make use of these snow shoes with common shoes. One must wear those of the Indians, which are a kind of sacks made of dried hides, folded over the extremity of the foot, and tied with cords.

Their sledges, which serve to transport the baggage, and in case of necessity the sick and wounded, are two small and very thin boards half a foot broad each, and six or seven long. The fore part is somewhat raised, and the sides bordered with small bands, to which the thongs for binding whatever is laid upon the carriage, is fastened. Let these carriages be ever so much loaded, an Indian draws it without difficulty, by means of a long thong or strap, which is pass'd round his breast, and is called a collar. They use them likewise for carrying burdens, and mothers for carrying their children with their cradles; but in this case the thong or collar is placed upon their forehead, and not on their breasts.

Every thing being ready, and the day of their departure come, they take their leave with great demonstrations of real affection. Every one is desirous

firous of having something the warriors have been in use to wear or carry about them, and gives them in return pledges of their friendship, and assurances of an everlasting remembrance of them. They scarce ever enter any of their cabins without carrying away their robe, in order to give them a better, or at least one full as good in its stead. Lastly, they all repair to the chief. They find him armed as on the first day of his addressing himself to them, and as he has appeared in publick ever since. They again have their faces painted, every one after his own fancy or caprice, and all of them generally so as to strike terror. The chief makes them a short harangue : afterwards he comes out of his cabin singing the death song. They all follow him in file, or one after another, observing a profound silence ; and the same thing is repeated every morning when they begin their march. Here the women lead the van with their provisions ; and when the warriors have joined them, they deliver to them all their baggage, and remain almost naked ; at least as much so as the season will allow.

Formerly the arms of the Indians were the bow and arrow, and a kind of javelin, both pointed with a kind of bone worked in different manners ; and lastly, the hatchet or break-head. This was formerly a short club of a very hard wood, the head of which was partly round, and partly sharp edged. Most had no defensive weapon ; but when they attacked any entrenchment, they covered their whole body with small light boards. Some have a sort of cuirass, or breast plate, of small pliable rings very neatly worked. They had even formerly a kind of mail for the arms and thighs made of the same materials. But as this kind of armour was found not to be proof against fire arms, they have renounced

them, without putting any thing in their place. The western Indians always use bucklers of buffaloes hide, which are very light, and proof against musket-shot. It is pretty surprising, the other Indian nations never use them.

When they use our swords, which is very rare, they handle them like our half pike : but when they can have fire arms, powder and shot, they abandon their bows, and are excellent marksmen. We have no cause to repent having given them these arms, tho' we were not the first to do it. The Iroquois had got them of the Dutch, who were then in possession of New-York ; which laid us under the necessity of giving them to our allies. They have a kind of standards or colours to know one another by, and to enable them to rally ; these are small pieces of bark cut into a round form, which they fix to the head of a pole, and on which is drawn the mark of their nation or village. If the party is numerous, each family or tribe has its peculiar ensign with its distinguishing mark. Their arms are also adorned with different figures, and sometimes with the mark of the chief.

But that which they are as careful not to forget, as even their arms, and which they guard with still more care, is their manitous. I shall treat more particularly of them elsewhere ; it suffices here to say, that they are so many symbols, under which every one represents his tutelar genius. They inclose them all in a bag made of rushes, and painted with different colours ; and often to do honour to the chief, they place this bag in the prow of his canoe. If there are too many manitous to be contained in one bag, they distribute them amongst several bags, which are entrusted to the care of the lieutenant



lieutenant and of the elders of each family. To these they join the presents which have been made them in order to obtain prisoners, together with the tongues of all the animals killed during the campaign, and which are to be sacrificed to the genii at their return.

In their marches by land, the chief carries his own bag called his matrafs, but may discharge this burden on any one at pleasure, and need not fear being refused, this being looked upon as an honour done the person to whom it is given : this is also a sort of right of survivorship to the command in case the chief and his lieutenant should happen to die in the campaign. But whilst I write you, behold me arrived in the river Niagara, where I shall meet with agreeable company, and remain some days. I set out from Riviere des Sables, the 21<sup>st</sup> before sun rise, but the wind proving always contrary, we were obliged at ten o'clock to enter the bay of the Tsonnonthouans. At half way between this bay and Riviere des Sables, there is a small river which I would not have failed to visit, had I been sooner informed of what it has that is singular, which I learnt just after my arrival here.

This river is called Casconchiagon, and is very narrow, and shallow at its discharge into the lake. A little higher it is 240 feet in breadth, and it is affirmed that there is water to float the largest ships. Two leagues from its mouth you are stopped by a fall, which seems to be about sixty feet high, and 240 feet broad ; a musket shot above this, you find a second of the same breadth, but not so high by a third : and half a league higher still a third, which is full a hundred feet high, and 360 feet broad. You meet after this with several rapids,

and after sailing fifty leagues higher, you discover a fourth fall, nothing inferior to the third. The course of this river is an hundred leagues, and after you have sailed up sixty leagues on it, you have no more than ten to make over land, turning towards the right, to arrive at the Ohio, otherwise, *la Belle Riviere*. The place where you arrive at is called Ganos, where, an officer worthy of credit, and from whom I have received all I have been relating to you, assures me he saw a fountain, the water of which resembles oil, and has the taste of iron. He added, that a little farther there is another exactly of the same kind, and that the Indians make use of its water to mitigate all kinds of pains.

The bay of the Tsonnonthouans is a delightful place : here is a fine river which meanders between two beautiful meadows skirted with hills, between which you discover vallies which stretch a great way, the whole forming the noblest prospect in the whole world, and is surrounded with a magnificent forest of the tallest and largest timber trees : but the soil seemed to me a little light and sandy. We set out again at half an hour past one, and continued our voyage till ten at night. Our design was to take up our night's lodgings within a small river called Buffaloe's river ; but we found the entry shut up with sand banks, which often happens to small rivers which discharge themselves into these lakes, by reason of their carrying a great quantity of sand along with them : for when the wind blows directly towards their mouths, the sand is stopped by the waves, and gradually forms a dike, so high and strong that the current of the rivers cannot force a passage thro' it, except at such times as they are swoln by the melting of the snow.

I was

I was obliged to pass the rest of the night in my canoe, where I was exposed to a very hard frost. Thus the trees were scarce observed to bud, but were all in the same state as in the middle of winter. We set out thence at half an hour past three in the morning of the 22d, being ascension day, and went to say mass at nine o'clock, at what is called *le Grand Marais*. This is much such another place as that of the Tsonnonthouans, but the lands seem better. Towards two o'clock in the afternoon, we entered the river of *Niagara* formed by the great fall, whereof I shall speak presently, or rather it is the river St. Lawrence, which proceeds from lake Eriè, and passes thro' lake Ontario after fourteen leagues of Narrows. It is called the river Niagara from the fall being a course of six leagues. After sailing three leagues, you find on the left some cabins of the Iroquois, Tsonnonthouans, and of the Missisagues as at Catarocoui. The Sieur de Joncaire, lieutenant of our troops, has also a cabin at this place, to which they have before hand given the name of Fort \* : for it is pretended that in time this will be changed into a great fortress.

I found here several officers, who were to return in a few days to Quebec. For this reason I am obliged to close my letter, which I shall send by that way. As for my own part, I foresee I shall have time sufficient to write you another after they are gone, and the place itself will in a great measure furnish me materials enough to fill it, together with

\* A fort has been since built in the mouth of the river of Niagara on the same side, and exactly at the place where Mons. de Denonville had built one, which subsisted not long. There even begins to be formed here a French town.

what I shall be able to learn of the officer I have mentioned.

*I have the honour to be, &c.*

*Niagara, May 23, 1721.*

LETTER



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## L E T T E R   X V .

*Transactions between the Tsonnonthouans (a tribe of the Iroquois) and the English, on occasion of building a French fort at Niagara. Description of the country. Fire-dance; story on this occasion. Description of the Fall of Niagara.*

*From the Fall of Niagara, May 14, 1721.*

*Madam,*

**I** Have already had the honour to acquaint you, that we have a scheme for a settlement in this place; but in order to know the reason of this project, it will be proper to observe, that as the English pretend, by virtue of the treaty of Utrecht, to the sovereignty of all the Iroquoise country, and by consequence, to be bounded on that side, by Lake Ontario only; now it is evident, that, in case we allow of their pretensions, they would then have it absolutely in their power to establish themselves firmly in the heart of the French colonies, or at least, entirely to ruin their commerce. In order, therefore, to prevent this evil, it has been judged proper, without, however, violating the treaty, to

make a settlement in some place, which might secure to us the free communication between the lakes, and where the English should not have it in their power to oppose us. A commission has therefore been given to M. de Joncaire, who having in his youth been prisoner amongst the Tsonnonthouans, so insinuated himself into the good graces of those Indians, that they adopted him, so that even in the hottest of their wars with us, and notwithstanding his remarkable services to his country, he has always enjoyed the privileges of that adoption.

On receiving the orders I have been now mentioning to you, he repaired to them, assembled their chiefs, and after having assured them, that his greatest pleasure in this world would be to live amongst his brethren ; he added, that he would much oftener visit them, had he a cabin amongst them, to which he might retire when he had a mind to be private. They told him, that they had always looked upon him as one of their own children, that he had only to make choice of a place to his liking in any part of the country. He asked no more, but went immediately and made choice of a spot on the banks of the river, which terminates the canton of Tsonnonthouan, where he built his cabin. The news of this soon reached New-York, where it excited so much the more the jealousy of the English, as that nation had never been able to obtain the favour granted to the Sieur de Joncaire, in any Iroquoise canton.

They made loud remonstrances, which being seconded with presents, the other four cantons at once espoused their interests. They were, however, never the nearer their point, as the cantons are not only independant of each other, but also very jealous

lous of this independance. It was therefore necessary to gain that of Tsonnonthouan, and the English omitted nothing to accomplish it ; but they were soon sensible they should never be able to get Joncaire dismissed from Niagara. At last they contented themselves with demanding, that, at least, they might be permitted to have a cabin in the same place ; but this was likewise refused them. “ Our country is in peace, said the Tsonnonthouans, the French and you will never be able to live together, without raising disturbances. Moreover, added they, it is of no consequence that Joncaire should remain here ; he is a child of the nation, he enjoys his right which we are not at liberty to take from him.”

Now, Madam, we must acknowledge, that nothing but zeal for the publick good could possibly induce an officer to remain in such a country as this, than which a wilder and more frightful is not to be seen. On the one side you see just under your feet, and as it were at the bottom of an abyfs, a great river, but which in this place is liker a torrent by its rapidity, by the whirlpools formed by a thousand rocks, through which it with difficulty finds a passage, and by the foam with which it is always covered ; on the other the view is confined by three mountains placed one over the other, and whereof the last hides itself in the clouds. This would have been a very proper scene for the poets to make the Titans attempt to scale the heavens. In a word, on whatever side you turn your eyes, you discover nothing which does not inspire a secret horror.

You have, however, but a very short way to go, to behold a very different prospect. Behind those uncultivated and uninhabitable mountains, you enjoy

joy the sight of a rich country, magnificent forests, beautiful and fruitful hills ; you breathe the purest air, under the mildest and most temperate climate imaginable, situated between two lakes the least of which \* is two hundred and fifty leagues in circuit.

It is my opinion that had we the precaution to make sure of a place of this consequence, by a good fortress, and by a tolerable colony, all the forces of the Iroquoise and English conjoined, would not have been able, at this time to drive us out of it, and that we ourselves would have been in a condition to give law to the former, and to hinder most part of the Indians from carrying their furs to the second, as they daily do with impunity. The company I found here with M. de Joncaire, was composed of the baron de Longueil, king's lieutenant in Montreal †, the marquis de Cavagnal, son of the marquis de Vaudreuil, the present governor of New-France ; M. de Senneville, captain, and the Sieur de la Chauvignerie, ensign, and interpreter of the Iroquoise language. These gentlemen are about negotiating an agreement of differences with the canton of Onontagué, and were ordered to visit the settlement of the Sieur de Joncaire, with which they were extremely well satisfied. The Tsonnonthouans renewed to them the promise they had formerly made them, to maintain it. This was done in a council, in which Joncaire, as they told me, spoke with all the good sense of a Frenchman, whereof he enjoys a large share, and with the sublimest eloquence of an Iroquoise.

\* Lake Ontario. Lake Erie is three hundred leagues round.

† He died governor of this city.



On the eve of their departure, that is, on the 29th, a Mississuague regaled us with a festival, which has something in it singular enough. It was quite dark when it began, and on entering the cabin of this Indian, we found a fire lighted, near which sat a man beating on a kind of drum; another was constantly shaking his *Chichicoué*, and singing at the same time. This lasted two hours, and tired us very much as they were always repeating the same thing over again, or rather uttering half articulated sounds, and that without the least variation. We entreated our host not to carry this prelude any further, who with a good deal of difficulty shewed us this mark of complaisance.

Next, five or six women made their appearance, drawing up in a line, in very close order, their arms hanging down, and dancing and singing at the same time, that is to say, they moved some paces forwards, and then as many backwards, without breaking the rank. When they had continued this exercise about a quarter of an hour, the fire, which was all that gave light in the cabin, was put out, and then nothing was to be perceived but an Indian dancing with a lighted coal in his mouth. The concert of the drum and *chichicoué* still continued, the women repeated their dances and singing from time to time; the Indian danced all the while, but as he could only be distinguished by the light of the coal in his mouth he appeared like a goblin, and was horrible to see. This medley of dancing, and singing, and instruments, and that fire which never went out, had a very wild and whimsical appearance, and diverted us for half an hour; after which we went out of the cabin, though the entertainment lasted till morning. This Madam is all I saw of the fire-dance, and I have not been able to learn what passed

passed the remainder of the night. The musick, which I heard for some time after, was a great deal more supportable at a distance than when near it. The contrast of male and female voices at a certain distance had a pleasant effect enough ; and if the Indian women were taught musick, I am confident they would make very agreeable singers.

I was very desirous to know how a man was able to hold a lighted coal in his mouth so long, without being burnt, and without its going out ; but all I have been able to learn of this point is, that the Indians are acquainted with a plant which renders the part that has been rubbed with it insensible to fire, but whereof they would never communicate the discovery to the Europeans. We know that the onion and garlick will produce the same effect, though for a very short while\*. Besides, how could this coal remain so long lighted ? be this as it will, I remember to have read in the letters of one of our ancient missionaries of Canada, a thing that has some relation to this, and which he learned from another missionary who was an eye-witness. This person shewed him one day a stone, which one of their jugglers or quacks had thrown into the fire in his presence, leaving it there till it became red hot ; after which falling into a sort of enthusiastick frenzy, he took it between his teeth, and carrying it always in that manner, went to visit a patient, the missionary following him ; as he cast the stone upon the ground, the father on taking it up, perceived the marks of the Indian's teeth in it, but yet could not observe the least sign of burning in his mouth. He does not mention what the quack

\* It is pretended that the leaves of the anemoné of Canada, in other respects very caustick, have this virtue.

did afterwards for the relief of the patient ; but here is another incident of the same kind, and proceeding from the same source, and of which your Grace will judge as you think proper.

A Huron woman, after having had a vision, true or false, was seized with a giddiness, and an almost universal contraction of the nerves. As this woman from the beginning of the disorder, never slept without having many troublesome dreams, she began to suspect something preternatural in it, and took it into her head, she should be cured by means of a feast whereof she herself regulated all the ceremonies, according to what she said, she remembered to have seen formerly practised. First, she would have them carry her to the village where she was born, the elders whom she caused to be advertized of her design exhorting all the people to accompany her. In a moment's time her cabin was crowded with people, who came to offer her their service. She accepted them, instructed them in what they were to do, and immediately the stoutest of them placed her in a kind of litter, and carried her by turns, singing with all their might.

When they were come near the village, they assembled a great council to which the missionaries were invited by way of compliment, who did all in their power, but ineffectually, to dissuade them from a thing, in which they justly suspected equal folly and superstition. They calmly heard all they had to say on this subject, but when they had done speaking, one of the chiefs of the council, undertook to refute their arguments, but with no better success. Then leaving the missionaries where he found them, he exhorted all the assistants to acquit themselves exactly of what should be prescribed  
them,



them, and to maintain the ancient customs. Whilst he was still speaking, two deputies from the patient entered the assembly, and requested on her behalf, to have sent her two young boys and two young girls, attired in robes and belts of Wampum, with certain presents, which she mentioned, adding, that she would make known her further intentions to these four persons.

This was immediately put in execution, a short while afterwards, the four young persons returned, empty handed, and almost naked, the patient having stript them of all they had, even to their very robes. In this condition they entered the council which was still assembled, and set forth the demands of this woman, consisting of two and twenty articles, amongst which one was a blue covering, to be furnished by the missionaries, and all of them to be delivered within an hour. They tried all their rhetoric to obtain the covering, but this being peremptorily refused, they were obliged to go without it. As soon as the sick person received the other presents, she entered the village, being carried, as I have already said, all the way. Towards evening, a publick crier, by her order, made proclamation, to have fires lighted in every cabbin, she being to visit them all, which accordingly she did as soon as the sun was set, being supported by two men, and followed by the whole village. She passed through the middle of all the fires, her feet and legs naked, without receiving any harm, whilst her two supporters, though they did their utmost endeavours to keep clear of being scorched suffered greatly, as they were obliged to conduct her in this manner across upwards of three hundred fires: as for her part, her constant complaint was of the cold;



cold ; at the end of this course, she declared she felt herself better.

On the morrow, at sunrise, they began, and by her order too, a kind of Bacchanalian festival, which lasted three days. On the first, all the people run through the cabins, breaking and overturning every thing, and, in proportion as the noise and hubbub encreased, the patient declared that her pains diminished. The other two days were spent in running over all the fires through which she had passed, proposing her desires in ænigmatical terms, which they were obliged to divine, and to perform accordingly, that instant ; some of these were obscene even to a horrible degree. The fourth day, the sick person made, a second time, the tour of all the cabins, but in a very different manner from the first. She was placed in the midst of two troops of Indians, marching one after another, with a sad and languishing air, and observing a profound silence. No person was suffered to be in her way, and those who formed the vanguard of her escort, cleared the road of all they met. As soon as she entered any cabin they made her sit down, and placed themselves round her ; she sighed, related with a moving accent, all her evils, and gave to understand that her being perfectly cured, depended on the accomplishment of some wish, which she kept to herself, and which must be divined. Every one did his best to interpret it, but this desire was very complex, and consisted of a great number of particulars, so that in proportion as they hit upon one of them, they were obliged to give her what she sought for, she scarce ever left any cabin, till she had got all it contained.

When she saw them at a loss to guess her meaning, she expressed herself somewhat more clearly, and when they had guessed all, she caused every thing to be restored. There was no longer any doubt of her being perfectly cured, and a festival was made on the occasion, which consisted in cries, or rather, hideous howlings, and all manner of extravagancies. Lastly, she paid her acknowledgments, and, the better to testify her gratitude, she visited all the cabbins a third time, but without any ceremony. The missionary, who was witness to this ridiculous scene, says, that the sick person was not entirely cured, but that she was, however, a great deal better, though the most healthy and robust person would have died under such an operation. The father was at great pains to cause her take notice, that her pretended genius or familiar, had promised her a perfect cure, but had failed of his promise. He was answered, that amongst such a number of things as were to be done, it was hardly possible something should not have been omitted. He expected they would have chiefly insisted on the refusal of the blue covering ; it is true they made no mention of it, only they said, that after this refusal, the genius had appeared to the patient, and assured her that this refusal should do her no prejudice, because, the French not being natives of the country, the genii had no power over them. I return to my voyage.

The officers having departed, I ascended those frightful mountains, in order to visit the famous Fall of Niagara, above which I was to take water ; this is a journey of three leagues, though formerly five ; because the way then lay by the other, that is, the west-side of the river, and also because the place for embarking lay full two leagues above the Fall.

Fall. But there has since been found, on the left, at the distance of half a quarter of a league from this cataract, a creek, where the current is not perceivable, and consequently a place where one may take water without danger. My first care, after my arrival, was to visit the noblest cascade perhaps in the world; but I presently found the baron de la Hontan had committed such a mistake with respect to its height and figure, as to give grounds to believe he had never seen it. It is certain, that if you measure its height by that of the three mountains, you are obliged to climb to get at it, it does not come much short of what the map of M. Deslisle makes it; that is, six hundred feet, having certainly gone into this paradox, either, on the faith of the baron de la Hontan or father Hennepin; but after I arrived at the summit of the third mountain, I observed, that in the space of three leagues, which I had to walk before I came to this piece of water, though you are sometimes obliged to ascend, you must yet descend still more, a circumstance to which travellers seem not to have sufficiently attended. As it is impossible to approach it but on one side only, and consequently to see it, excepting in profil, or sideways; it is no easy matter to measure its height with instruments. It, has, however, been attempted by means of a pole tied to a long line, and after many repeated trials, it has been found only one hundred and fifteen, or one hundred and twenty feet high. But it is impossible to be sure that the pole has not been stoppt by some projecting rock; for though it was always drawn up wet, as well as the end of the line to which it was tied, this proves nothing at all, as the water which precipitates itself from the mountain, rises very high in foam. For my own part, after having

examined it on all sides, where it could be viewed to the greatest advantage, I am inclined to think we cannot allow it less than a hundred and forty, or fifty feet.

As to its figure, it is in the shape of a horse-shoe, and is about four hundred paces in circumference ; it is divided into two, exactly in the middle, by a very narrow island, half a quarter of a league long. It is true, those two parts very soon unite ; that on my side, and which I could only have a side view of, has several branches which project from the body of the cascade, but that which I viewed in front, appeared to me quite entire. The baron de la Hontan mentions a torrent, which if this author has not invented it, must certainly fall through some channel on the melting of the snows.

You may easily guess, Madam, that a great way below this Fall, the river still retains strong marks of so violent a shock ; accordingly, it becomes only navigable three leagues below, and exactly at the place which M. de Joncaire has chosen for his residence. It should by right be equally unnavigable above it, since the river falls perpendicular the whole space of its breadth. But besides the island, which divides it into two, several rocks which are scattered up and down above it, abate much of the rapidity of the stream ; it is notwithstanding so very strong, that ten or twelve Outaways trying to cross over to the island to shun the Iroquoise who were in pursuit of them, were drawn into the precipice, in spite of all their efforts to preserve themselves.

I have



I have heard say that the fish that happen to be entangled in the current, fall dead into the river, and that the Indians of those parts were considerably advantaged by them; but I saw nothing of this sort. I was also told, that the birds that attempted to fly over were sometimes caught in the whirlwind formed, by the violence of the torrent. But I observed quite the contrary, for I saw small birds flying very low, and exactly over the Fall, which yet cleared their passage very well.

This sheet of water falls upon a rock, and there are two reasons which induce me to believe, that it has either found, or perhaps in time hollowed out a cavern of considerable depth. The first is, that the noise it makes is very hollow, resembling that of thunder at a distance. You can scarce hear it at M. de Joncaire's, and what you hear in this place, may possibly be only that of the whirlpools caused by the rocks, which fill the bed of the river as far as this. And so much the rather as above the cataract, you do not hear it near so far. The second is, that nothing has ever been seen again that has once fallen over it, not even the wrecks of the canoe of the Outaways, I mentioned just now. Be this as it will, Ovid gives us the description of such another cataract situated according to him in the delightful valley of Tempe. I will not pretend that the country of Niagara is as fine as that, though I believe its cataract much the noblest of the two\*.

\* Est nemus Hæmoniaë, prærupta quod undique claudit  
Sylva, vocant Tempe, per quæ Peneus ab imo  
Effusus Pindo spumosis volvitur undis.  
Dejectisque gravi tenues agitantia fumos  
Nubila conducit, summisque aspergine fylvas  
Impluit, et sonitis plusquam vicina fatigat.

MET. LIV. I.

Besides I perceived no mist above it, but from behind, at a distance, one would take it for smoke, and there is no person who would not be deceived with it, if he came in sight of the isle, without having been told before-hand that there was so surprising a cataract in this place.

The soil of the three leagues I had to walk a foot to get hither, and which is called the carrying-place of Niagara, seems very indifferent; it is even very ill-wooded, and you cannot walk ten paces without treading on ant-hills, or meeting with rattle-snakes, especially during the heat of the day. I think, I told you, Madam, that the Indians esteem the flesh of those reptiles a very great dainty. In general, serpents are no way frightful to these people; there is no animal you see oftener painted on their faces and bodies, and they seldom ever pursue them, except for food. The bones and skins of serpents are also of great service to their jugglers and wizards in divining; the last of which they make use of for belts and fillets. It is no less true what we are told of their having the secret of enchanting, or, to speak more properly, stupifying those animals; their taking them alive, handling them, and putting them in their bosom, without receiving any hurt; a circumstance, which contributes not a little towards gaining them the great credit they have amongst these people.

I was going to seal this letter, when my people came to tell me, we should not set out to-morrow as I expected. So I must wait with patience, and profit what I can of my spare time. I am therefore going to resume the article of the wars of the Indians, which will not be so soon exhausted. The

moment all the warriors are embarked, the canoes sail to a little distance, keeping close together in one line; then the chief rises, holding in his hand his *chichicouè*, and sings aloud his own war-song, to which his soldiers made answer by a treble *bé!* fetched from the bottom of their breasts. The elders and chiefs of the council who have remained on the banks, then exhort the warriors to do their duty, and above all to beware of being surprised. This is, of all the advices which can be given an Indian, the most necessary, and that, by which they generally profit least. This admonition, however, interrupts not the chief who continues to sing all the while. Lastly, the warriors conjure their relations and friends, to remember them continually, and then raising the most horrid shouts or howlings all together, they immediately set out with so much celerity, that they are instantly out of sight.

The Hurons and Iroquois make no use of the *chichicouè*, but give them to their prisoners, so that this which with other Indians is a warlike instrument, seems with them a mark or badge of slavery. The warriors never make short marches, especially when in large bodies; moreover, they construe every thing that happens into an omen, and the jugglers, whose function it is to explain them, hasten or retard their marches at pleasure. Whilst they are in a country where they have no suspicion of an enemy, they use no manner of precaution, and sometimes there are scarce half a dozen warriors together, the rest being dispersed up and down a hunting. But let them be at ever so great a distance from the rout, they are sure to be at the place of rendezvous at the hour appointed.

They pitch their camp long before sun-set, and commonly leave in the front of it a large space, inclosed with a pallisade, or rather a kind of lattice-work, on which are placed their manitous, turned towards that side on which their rout lies. They invoke them for the space of an hour, and the same thing is done every morning before they set out. This being done, they imagine they have nothing to fear, being persuaded that the genii take upon themselves the office of centinels, and the whole army sleeps securely under their safeguard. No experience is able to undeceive these barbarians, or to draw them out of their presumptuous confidence. This has its source in an indolence and laziness which nothing is able to overcome.

Every thing in the way of the warriors is held as an enemy. In case, however, they should happen to meet with their allies, or parties of near the same force with whom they no have quarrel, they enter in a league of mutual friendship. If the allies they meet are at war with the same enemy, the chief of the strongest party, or of that which has first taken up arms, gives the other a present of scalps, of which they never fail to make provision for such occasions; and tells him, *You also have a blow here*; that is, you have fulfilled your engagements, your honour is now secure, and you are at liberty to return; but this is to be understood when the rencounter is accidental, and that no word or promise has passed betwixt them, or that they have no need of a reinforcement.

When they are on the point of entering the enemy's country, they halt to perform a very extraordinary ceremony. In the evening there is a great  
feast



feast, after which they go to sleep. As soon as all are awake, those who have had any dreams go from tent to tent, or rather from fire to fire, singing their death-song, in which they insert their dreams in an enigmatical manner. Every one sets his brains to work to interpret them, and should no one be able to succeed in it, the dreamers are free to return home. A notable opportunity for cowards truly. Afterwards new invocations are made to the genii, and they animate themselves anew to acquit themselves nobly, and to perform wonders; they swear to aid each other mutually; lastly, they begin their march, and in case they have come thus far in canoes, they take a great care to conceal them. If every thing were exactly done, which is prescribed on such occasions, it would be very difficult to surprise an Indian party in an enemy's country. There must no more fires be lighted, no more shouting, and no more hunting; they are not even to speak but by signs; but these laws are ill-observed. The Indians are naturally presumptuous, and the least capable of confinement of any people in the world. They neglect not, however, to send out scouts every evening, who employ two or three hours in excursions on different sides. If these discover nothing, they sleep securely, and once more abandon their camp to the safeguard of their manitous.

As soon as they have discovered an enemy, they send to reconnoitre him, and on the report of those sent out, hold a council. The attack is generally made at day-break. This is the time they suppose the enemy to be in the deepest sleep, and they keep themselves the whole night laid flat upon their faces, without stirring. They make their approaches in the same manner, creeping upon hands and feet, till they

have got within a bow-shot of the enemy. Then they all start up, the chief gives the signal by a small cry, to which the whole body makes answer by hideous howlings, and at the same time make their discharge. Then without giving them time to recover from their confusion they pour upon them with hatchet in hand. Since the Indian have substituted iron hatchets to their old wooden ones, their battles have become more bloody. The combat ended, they scalp the dead and dying, and never think of making prisoners, till all resistance is over.

But when they find the enemy on his guard, or too strongly intrenched they retire, provided they have still time to do it. If not, they boldly resolve on fighting to the last drop, and there is sometimes abundance of blood-shed on both sides. A camp which has been forced is the very picture of fury itself, the barbarous fierceness of the conquerors, the despair of the conquered, who know what they have to expect should they fall alive into the hands of the enemy, occasion prodigious efforts on both sides, which surpass all that can be related of them. The figure of the combatants all besmeared with black and red, still augments the horror of the conflict, and a very good picture of hell might be drawn from this model. When the victory is no longer doubtful, the conquerors first dispatch all such as they despair of being able to carry with them, without trouble, and then try only to tire the rest whom they are desirous of making prisoners.

The Indians are naturally intrepid, and in spite of their brutal fierceness always retain abundance of cold

cold blood in the midst of action; yet they never engage in an open country when they can avoid it; their reason for it being, say they, that a victory bought with blood is no victory, and that the glory of a chief consists above all things in bringing back all his people safe and sound, or in whole skins. I have heard say, that when two enemies who are acquaintances meet in battle, they hold dialogues together like the speeches of former heroes. I do not believe this happens in the heat of the action, but it may very well happen in small rencounters, or before passing some rivulet, or facing an entrenchment, in which case they bid one another defiance, or recall to memory what may have passed in some former action.

War is almost always made by surprize, which generally succeeds well enough. For if the Indians are negligent in guarding against surprizes, they are equally alert and dextrous in surprizing their enemies. Besides, these people have a natural and a most admirable talent, or I might call it an instinct, to know whether they have passed any particular way. On the smoothest grass, or the hardest earth, even on the very stones, they will discover the traces of an enemy, and by their shape and figure of the footsteps, and the distance between their prints, they will, it is said, distinguish not only different nations, but also tell whether they were men or women who have gone that way. I was long of opinion that what I had been told of them was much exaggerated, but the uniform voices of all who have lived and conversed much with Indians, leave me no room to question the truth of them. If there are any of the prisoners wounded in such manner as that they cannot be transported, they immediately

ly burn them, and this is done in their first transports of rage, and as they are often obliged to make a hasty retreat, they generally come off cheaper than those they reserve for a slower punishment.

It is customary among some nations, for the chief of the victorious party to leave his hatchet upon the field of battle, on which he takes care to trace the mark of his nation, that of his family, together with his own portrait, that is, an oval, with all the figures he wears on his visage represented within it. Others paint all these marks on the trunk of a tree, or on a piece of bark, with charcoal dust mixed with some other colours. They also add hieroglyphick characters by means of which passengers may inform themselves of the minutest circumstances, not only of the action but of the whole campaign. The chief of the party may be known by the marks above-mentioned; the number of his exploits by so many matraffes; the number of his soldiers by so many lines; that of the prisoners by so many small figures carrying staves, or chichicoués; that of the killed by so many human figures without heads, with such different marks as serve to distinguish men grown from women and children. But this is not always found very near the place of action, for when a party is in fear of being pursued, they place them at a distance from their route, in order to deceive their pursuers.

Till such time as they reach a country where they may be in safety, they make abundance of dispatch, and that the wounded may not retard their flight, they carry them by turns on litters, or draw them  
on



on sledges if it is in the winter-season. On entering their canoes, they make their prisoners sing, which is also done as often as they meet with any of their allies. This honour costs those who receive it a feast, and something still worse than the trouble of singing to the wretched captives. They invite their allies to *carefs* them; now to carefs a prisoner is to do him all the mischief they can think of, or to maim him in such manner that he remains a cripple for ever after. There are some chiefs, however, who take indifferent good care of these unhappy people, and who do not suffer them to be too cruelly handled; but nothing can come up to their care in watching them. In the day time they are tied by the neck and arm to the timbers of a canoe, and when the journey is by land, there is always one to hold them. In the night-time they are stretched along the ground quite naked, and there are cords fixed to hooks planted in the ground, which tie their legs, arms, and neck so fast, that they cannot stir, and there are besides, long cords, which are fastened to their hands and feet in such manner, that the least motion they make wakens the Indian who lies on these cords.

After the warriors have got within a certain distance of their village, they halt, and the chief sends to give notice of his approach. Amongst some nations, as soon as the deputy has got near enough to be within hearing, he makes different cries which communicate a general idea of the principal adventures and success of the campaign. The first signifies the number of men killed, by so many death-cries. Immediately the young people come out to inform themselves more particularly; and often a whole village runs out, but only one person accosts  
the

the envoy, learns of him the detail of the news he brings; as he relates any particular, the other turns towards the rest of the people and repeats it aloud, and they answer by so many acclamations or cries of lamentation, as the news prove mournful, or the contrary.

The envoy is afterwards conducted into a cabin, where the elders put the same questions to him, after which a publick crier invites all the youth to go to meet the warriors, and the women to carry them refreshments. In other parts they think of nothing at first but bewailing those they have lost. The envoy makes only death-cries. No body comes out to meet him; but on his entering the village he finds all the people assembled, he relates in few words all that has passed, and then retires to his cabin, where they bring him something to eat, and for some time they are wholly occupied in mourning for the dead.

This term being expired, another cry is made, to denote the victory. Then every one wipes off his tears, and there is nothing but rejoicing; something like this is done, at the return from hunting; the women who have remained in the village go out to meet them, on being informed of their approach, and before they are acquainted with the success of their hunting, they signify by their tears the number of deaths since their departure. To return to the warriors, the moment the women join them is properly the beginning of the sufferings of the prisoners; likewise, when some of them have at first been appointed to be adopted, which is not lawful in every nation, their future parents, whom they take care to inform, go to a  
greater

greater distance to receive them, and conduct them to their cabbins by round about ways. The captives are generally long in the dark with respect to their fate, and there are few who escape the first fallies of the rage of the women. But this article would carry me too far, and we must set out to-morrow betimes.

*I am, &c.*

LETTER





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## L E T T E R XVI.

*First reception of the prisoners. Triumph of the warriors. Distribution of the captives; in what manner their fate is decided, with what happens afterwards. The inhumanity with which those are treated who are condemned to death. The courage they shew. Negotiations of the Indians.*

*Entrance of Lake Erié, May 27th, 1721.*

*Madam,*

**I** Set out this morning from the Falls of Niagara, and had about seven leagues to make before I got to Lake Erié, which I have done without any trouble. We laid our account with not lying here this night; and while my people were rowing with all their might, I made a good progress in a new letter, and now whilst they are taking a little repose I shall finish, and give it to some Canadians going to Montreal, whom I met with in this place. I shall resume my account where I left it off in my last.

All

All the prisoners who are condemned to die, and those whose fate is not yet determined, are, as I have already told you, Madam, abandoned to the women, who go before the warriors, and it is surprising how they are able to survive all the torments they make them suffer. If any one has lost in the war a son, husband, or any other person who was dear to her, were it thirty years before, she becomes a fury, she fixes upon the first who falls into her hands, and it cannot be conceived to what length her rage will transport her. She has no regard either to humanity or decency, and at every blow she gives, you would think he would fall dead at her feet, if you did not know how ingenious these barbarians are in protracting the most unheard of torments. The whole night is spent in this manner at the encampment of the warriors.

Next day is a day of triumph for the conquerors. The Iroquois and some others affect a great modesty, and still a greater disinterestedness on these occasions. The chiefs enter the village first by themselves, without any marks of victory, observing a profound silence, and retire to their cabins, without shewing that they have the least pretensions upon any of the captives. But amongst other nations affairs are carried on in a different manner; the chief marches at the head of his company with the air of a conqueror, his lieutenant comes after him, and is preceded by a crier whose business is to repeat the death-cry. The warriors follow two and two, the prisoners being in the middle crowned with flowers, their face and hair painted, holding a stick in one hand and a chichicoué in the other, their body almost naked, their arms tied above the elbow with a cord, the extremities of which are held  
by

by the warriors, and singing all the while their death-song to the beat of the chichikoué.

This song is at the same time extremely fierce and doleful, the captive discovering nothing that has the least appearance of a person that has been vanquished, or is under affliction. The purport of this song is as follows: "I am brave and undaunted, and fear neither death nor the cruellest torments; those who fear them are cowards and less than women; life is nothing to a man that has courage; may rage and despair choak all my enemies; why cannot I devour them and drink up their blood to the last drop." The prisoners are made to halt from time to time, the Indians meanwhile flocking round them, dancing themselves and causing them to dance which they seem to do very chearfully, relating all the time the bravest actions of their lives, and mentioning the names of all those whom they have killed or burnt. They take particular notice of those in whom the assistants are mostly interested; and it may be said, that their chief design is to incense the arbiters of their fate more and more against them. These bravados seldom fail to provoke the fury of all who hear them, and their vanity frequently costs them dear. But from the manner in which they bear the cruellest treatment, one should think that tormenting them is doing them a pleasure.

Sometimes they are forced to run between two rows of Indians armed with stones and cudgels, who strike them as if they intended to knock them down at every blow. This, however, never happens, for even when they seem to strike at random, and to be actuated only by fury, they

take care never to touch any part where a blow might prove mortal. During this operation any one has the liberty to stop the sufferer, who is likewise permitted to stand in his defence, though it is seldom done to any purpose. As soon as they arrive at the village, they are led from cabin to cabin, and are every where treated in the same manner. Here they pluck off a nail, there they take off a finger, either with their teeth, or a bad knife which cuts like a saw ; an old man tears off their flesh to the bones, a child pierces them with an awl wherever he can, a woman beats them unmercifully till her arms fall down with fatigue ; all this time none of the warriors lay hands on them, tho' they are still their masters. They are not even suffered to be maimed without their permission, which is seldom granted. This excepted, every one may make them suffer what torments he pleases, and if they are led about in several villages, either of the same nation, or of their neighbours, or allies, who happen to desire it, they every where meet with the same reception.

These preliminaries over, they set about dividing the captives whose lot depends upon those into whose power they are delivered up. As soon as the council, where their fate has been determined is over, a crier calls an assembly of the people in the square, where a distribution is made without any noise or dispute whatsoever. Those women who have lost their sons or husbands in the war, are commonly satisfied in the first place. Afterwards they fulfil the engagements entered into with those from whom they have received collars of Wampum ; if there is not a sufficient number of prisoners for this purpose, the defect is supplied with scalps, which are worn by way of ornament on days of rejoicing,



but at other times are hung up at the gates of their cabbins. If on the other hand the number of prisoners is more than sufficient for these purposes, the overplus is sent to their allies. The place of a chief is never filled up but by a chief, or by two or three slaves, who are always burnt, even though the chief had died a natural death. The Iroquois never fail to set apart some prisoners for the use of the publick, in which case the council disposes of them as they think proper; but the matrons still have the power to abrogate their sentence, being absolute sovereigns of the life and death of those who have been condemned or absolved by the council.

The warriors, in some nations, never divest themselves entirely of the right of disposing of their prisoners, and those to whom the council has distributed them, are obliged to make restitution to them if demanded; which, however, seldom happens, but when it does, they are also obliged to restore the pledges they have received from those who had contracted for these prisoners. If upon their arrival, the warriors declare their intentions upon this point, they are seldom opposed. In general, the greatest number of the prisoners of war are condemned to die, or to a very severe slavery in which their life is never secure. Some are adopted, and from that time their condition differs in nothing from that of the children of the nation; they assume all the rights of those whose place they occupy, and frequently enter into the spirit of the nation, of which they are become members, in such a manner, that they make no difficulty of going to war against their own countrymen. By this policy, the Iroquoise have hitherto supported themselves, for having been constantly at war from time immemorial, with all the nations round them, they

must have been, by this time, reduced to nothing had they not taken care to naturalize a large proportion of their prisoners of war.

It sometimes happens that instead of sending the overplus of the captives to other villages, they present theirs to private persons, who did not demand any, who, in such a case, are not so much their masters as not to be obliged to consult the chiefs of the council what they are to do with them, or else to adopt them. If the first case, he to whom a slave has been given, sends for him by one of his family, he then ties him up to the door of his cabin, after which he calls together the chiefs of the council, to whom he declares his intentions, and asks their advice, which they generally give in a manner conformable to his inclinations. In the second case, on delivering the prisoner into his hands, they tell him. "It is a long time since we have  
" been deprived of such a one, your friend, or relation, who was the support of our village." Or, "We regret the spirit of such a one, whom  
" you have lost, and who, by his wisdom maintained the tranquillity of the publick, he must  
" this day be made to appear again, he was too  
" dear to us, as well as too valuable a personage to  
" defer any longer bringing him back to life; we  
" therefore replace him upon his mattrafs in the  
" person of this captive."

There are some private persons, however, probably of more credit and reputation than common, who receive the gift of a prisoner without any condition at all, and with full liberty to dispose of him as they shall think proper; on delivering him into such a person's hands the council address him in this manner. "Behold wherewithal to repair the loss  
" of

“ of such a one, and to glad the heart of his fa-  
 “ ther, his mother, his wife and his children ; whe-  
 “ ther you chuse to make them drink the broth  
 “ of this flesh, or rather incline to replace the de-  
 “ ceased upon his mattrafs in the person of this cap-  
 “ tive. You may do with him according to your  
 “ will and pleasure.”

As soon as a prisoner is adopted he is carried to the cabin, where he is to remain, and his bonds are immediately loosed. He is washed with warm water, and his wounds are probed, if he has any, and were they even full of worms he is soon cured ; nothing is omitted to make him forget all the evils he has suffered, victuals are set before him, and he is properly dressed. In a word, they could not do more for the child of the house, or even for the person whom he restores again to life, as they express themselves. Some days after this a feast is made, in the course of which he receives in a solemn manner the name of him whom he replaces, and from thenceforth not only succeeds to all his rights, but likewise becomes liable to all his obligations.

Amongst the Hurons and Iroquois those who are condemned to be burnt, are sometimes as well treated from the first, and even till the moment of their execution, as those who are adopted. It is probable these are victims fattened for sacrifice, and they are indeed offered up to the god of war : the only difference betwixt them and other captives, is that their faces are smeared over with black. Excepting this, they treat them in the best manner possible, setting before them the best food, never speaking to them but with an air of friendship, calling them son, brother, nephew, according as they themselves are related to the person whose manes the prisoners are

to appease by their death : sometimes they yield the girls up to their pleasures, who serve them as wives during the time they have yet to live. But when they are apprised of their fate, they must be carefully watched for fear they should escape. For this reason it is often concealed from them.

As soon as every thing is ready for the execution they are delivered up to a woman, who from the fondness of a mother passes at once into the rage of a fury, and from the tenderest caresses to the most extreme transports of madness. She begins with invoking the shade of him whom she is about to avenge. " Approach, says she, thou art going to  
 " be appeased ; I am preparing for thee a feast,  
 " drink deep draughts of this broth which is now  
 " to be poured out before thee ; receive the victim  
 " prepared for thee in the person of this warrior ;  
 " he shall be burnt and put into the chaldron ;  
 " burning hatchets shall be applied to his skin ; his  
 " scalp shall be flea'd off ; they will drink out of  
 " his scull ; cease therefore thy complaining ; thou  
 " shalt be fully satisfied." This formula, which is properly the sentence of death, often varies considerably in the expression, but is always nearly the same in substance. A crier then calls the prisoner out of his cabin, proclaiming with a loud voice the intentions of the person to whom he belongs, and concludes with exhorting the youth to perform their parts well. A second herald then advances, and addressing himself to the prisoner, tells him, " Thou  
 " art going to be burnt, my brother, be of good  
 " courage." He again answers coolly, " It is  
 " well, I thank thee." Immediately the whole village set up a loud shout, and the prisoner is conducted to the place appointed for his execution.



The prisoner is commonly tied to a post by the hands and feet, but in such a manner that he may turn quite round it. Sometimes when the execution is to be in a cabin, whence there is no danger of his making his escape, he is not tied, but suffered to run from one end to the other. Before they begin burning him, he sings his death song for the last time, then he makes a recital of all the gallant actions of his life, and almost always in a manner the most insulting to the by-standers. Afterwards he exhorts them not to spare him, but to remember that he is a man and a warrior. I am much mistaken, if the sufferer's singing with all his might, and insulting and defying his executioners, as they commonly do to their last breath, is the circumstance that ought to surprise us most in those tragical and barbarous scenes; for there is in this a fierceness which elevates the mind, which transports it, and even withdraws it from the thoughts of what they suffer, and at the same time prevents their shewing too much sensibility. Besides, the motions they make divert their thoughts, and produce the same effect, nay sometimes a greater, than cries and tears would do. In the last place, they are sensible there is no mercy to be expected, and despair gives them strength, and inspires them with resolution.

This species of insensibility is not however so universal as a great many have believed. It is no rare thing to hear these wretches crying in such a manner as would pierce the hardest hearts, which however only rejoices the actors and assistants. But as to this inhumanity in the Indians, of which human nature could hardly have been thought capable, I believe they have attained to it by degrees, and that practice has insensibly accustomed them to it; that the desire of making their enemy show a

meanness of spirit, the insults which the sufferers never fail to offer to their tormentors, the desire of revenge, a ruling passion in these people, which they never think sufficiently gratified while those who are the objects of it continue to shew the least sparks of remaining courage, and finally, superstition have all a great share in it : for what excesses will not a false zeal, inflamed by so many passions, produce !

I shall not give you a detail, Madam, of every thing that passes at these horrible executions. It would engage me too far, because there is no uniformity, nor any rules in them but what are suggested by fury and caprice. There are often as many actors as spectators, that is to say, inhabitants of the village, men, women and children, every one doing as much mischief as possible, and none but those belonging to the cabin to which the prisoner had been delivered, refraining from tormenting him ; at least this is the practice among some nations. They commonly begin with burning the feet, then the legs, thus ascending to the head, and sometimes they make the punishment last for a whole week, as happened to a gentleman of Canada among the Iroquois. Those are least spared, who having been already taken and adopted, or set at liberty, are afterwards retaken. They are looked upon as unnatural children, or ungrateful persons, who have made war upon their parents and benefactors, and no mercy whatever is shewn them. It sometimes happens that the patient is left at his liberty, even tho' he is not executed in a cabin, and suffered to stand on his own defence, which he does less thro' hope of saving his life, than out of a desire to revenge his death before hand, and to acquire the reputation of dying like a brave man. There have been many instances to prove what a prodigious degree of strength and courage such a resolution is capable

capable of inspiring, of which the following, attested by persons of credit who were eye-witnesses, is one very remarkable.

An Iroquois captain of the canton called *Onneyouth*, rather chose to expose himself to the worst that could happen, than to dishonour himself by flying, which he reckoned of dangerous consequence from the ill example it would give to the youth under his command. He fought a long time like a man resolved to die with his arms in his hands, but the Hurons his enemies were resolved on taking him if possible alive. Luckily for him and those who were taken prisoners with him, they were conducted to a village where there happened to be some missionaries, who were allowed the full liberty of conversing with them. These fathers found them of an admirable docility, which they looked upon as a beginning of the grace of their conversion; accordingly they instructed and baptized them; they were all burnt in a few days afterwards, and testified to their last moments a sort of constancy, which the Indians were not till then acquainted with, and which, infidels as they were, they attributed to the virtue of the sacrament of baptism.

The Iroquois captain, notwithstanding, believed he might lawfully do his enemies all the mischief in his power, and delay his death as long as possible. They had made him ascend a sort of stage or theatre, where they began by burning his body all over, without the least mercy, to which he appeared as insensible as if he had felt no pain; but on perceiving one of his companions whom they were tormenting just by him, betray some signs of weakness, he testified a great deal of uneasiness, and omitted nothing in his power to encourage him to  
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bear his sufferings with patience, thro' the hopes of the happiness awaiting them in heaven, and he had the satisfaction to see him expire like a brave man and a christian.

Then all those who had put his companion to death fell upon him with such rage as if they would tear him to pieces. He appeared not at all moved at it, and they were now at a loss to find any part of his body that was sensible to pain; when one of the executioners, after making an incision in the skin quite round his head, tore it entirely off by mere force and violence. The pain made him fall into a swoon, when his tormentors believing him dead, left him. Upon his recovery a moment after, and seeing nothing near him but the dead body of his friend, he took up a firebrand with both hands, scorched and fled as they were, defying his executioners to come near him. This uncommon resolution terrified them, they made hideous shouts, ran to arms, some laying hold of burning coals, and and others seizing red hot irons, and all at once poured upon him; he stood the brunt of their fury with the courage of a man in despair, and even made them retire. The fire that surrounded him served him for an entrenchment, which he completed with the ladders they had used to ascend the scaffold, and thus fortifying himself, and making a sort of citadel of his funeral pile, which was now become the theatre of his bravery, and armed with the instruments of his torture, he was for a considerable time the terror of a whole canton, and not one had the heart to approach him, tho' he was more than half burnt to death, and the blood trickled from all parts of his body.

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His foot happening to slip, as he was endeavouring to avoid a fire-brand darted at him, delivered him once more into the hands of his murderers, who, as you may well imagine, made him pay dear for the terror he had put them into. After being tired with tormenting him, they threw him into the middle of a great coal fire, where they left him, fully persuaded he would never be able to rise from it. But they were deceived, for when they least thought of it, they beheld him armed with fire-brands running towards the village, as if he was going to set it on fire. All hearts were frozen with fear, and no one dared to face him, when just as he had almost reached the first cabin, a stick thrown at him, and falling between his legs, brought him to the ground, and they laid hold of him before he could recover himself. Here they first cut off his hands and feet, and rolled him upon burning embers, and then threw him below the burning trunk of a tree, the whole village gathering round him to enjoy the spectacle.

He lost such a quantity of blood as almost extinguished the fire, so that they had now no manner of apprehension remaining of any future attempt. He made however another, which struck terror into the most undaunted. He crept upon his knees and elbows with so much vigour, and with such a threatening aspect, as made those who were nearest him retire to a distance, more indeed out of astonishment than fear, for what could he have done mutilated and dismembered as he was? In this dreadful condition the missionaries, who had never lost sight of him, endeavoured to put him in mind of those eternal truths with which he had been at first so much penetrated; he listened with attention, and seemed for some time entirely taken up with the thoughts  
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of his salvation, when one of the Hurons taking advantage of this opportunity, struck off his head.

If those nations, Madam, make war like Barbarians, it must however be allowed that in treaties of peace, and generally in all negotiations, they display such a dexterity, address and elevation of soul, as would do honour to the most civilized nations. They never trouble themselves about making conquests, or extending their dominions. Some nations know no manner of dominion or sovereignty ; and those who have never been at a distance from their native country, and who look upon themselves as the lords and sovereigns of the soil, are not so jealous of their property as to find fault with newcomers who settle on it, provided they do not attempt to molest them. The points which are the only subjects of their treaties, are to make alliances against powerful enemies ; to put an end to a war which may have become burthensome to both parties ; or rather to treat of a suspension of hostilities, for I have already observed, that every war is everlasting among the Indians, when it happens between different nations. Thus a treaty of peace is very little to be depended on, whilst any of the parties are capable of molesting or giving uneasiness to the other.

During the whole time of the negotiation, and even before it commences, their chief care is, that they may not seem to make the first advances, or if they do, they use all their address to make their enemy believe that it does not proceed from fear or necessity ; and this last is managed very artfully. A plenipotentiary abates nothing of his haughtiness, even when the affairs of his country are in the worst situation ;

situation ; and he has generally the good fortune to persuade those with whom he is treating, that it is their interest to put an end to hostilities, tho' they have been the conquerors. It is besides of the last consequence to himself, to employ all his eloquence and address, for should his proposals happen not to be relished, he must keep well on his guard, a blow with a hatchet being sometimes the only answer given on such occasions. He is not out of danger even if he escapes the first surprise, but must lay his account with being pursued and burnt, if taken, provided such an act of violence can be justified by any pretext, such as that of reprisals for a like proceeding. Thus it happened to some French amongst the Iroquois, to whom they had been sent on the part of the governor general ; and the missionaries, who for some years resided among those Barbarians, altho' they were under the safeguard of the public faith, and in some measure agents for the colony, yet were every day in dread of being sacrificed to some ancient grudge, or becoming victims to the intrigues of the governors of New-York.

It is surprising, in short, that nations who never make war from motives of interest, and who even carry their disinterestedness to such a height, that their warriors never load themselves with the spoils of the vanquished, and if they bring home any booty, abandon it to the first that pleases to take it ; and lastly, who take up arms for glory only, or to revenge themselves on their enemies ; it is, I say, quite astonishing to see them so well versed and practised in the greatest refinements of policy, and even so as to keep ministers residing amongst their enemies at the public expence. They have one custom with respect to these agents, which at first sight appears sufficiently extravagant, tho' it may be reckoned

koned prudent enough at the same time, which is that they never pay any regard to any intelligence they receive from these pensioners, if it is not accompanied with some present. Their policy here arises no doubt from this consideration, that in order to give an entire credit to any piece of intelligence, it is not only necessary that he who communicates it should have nothing to hope from it, but even that it should be attended with some expence to him, both because the interest of the public should be his only motive for sending it, and also that he may not rashly trouble them with trifling and superficial matters.

*I am, &c.*

End of the FIRST VOLUME.













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